BEYOND THE WALLS: THE POWER OF PROPHETIC PREACHING TO MOTIVATE A CONGREGATION TO DEVELOP SUSTAINABLE OUTREACH MINISTRY

Cassandra Gould

B.A. Psychology, Columbia College 2007

M.Div., Eden Theological Seminary 2010

Mentors

Harold Carter, Jr. D.Min.

Rudolph McKissick, Jr. D.Min.

A FINAL PROJECT SUBMITTED TO

THE DOCTORAL STUDIES COMMITTEE

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

DAYTON, OHIO

DECEMBER, 2012

UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Dayton, Ohio

Faculty Approval Page

Doctor of Ministry Final Project

BEYOND THE WALLS: THE POWER OF PROPHETIC PREACHING TO MOTIVATE A CONGREGATION TO DEVELOP SUSTAINABLE OUTREACH MINISTRY

by

Cassandra Gould

United Theological Seminary, 2012

Mentors

Harold Carter, Jr. D.Min.

Rudolph McKissick, Jr. D.Min.

Date: _____

Approved:

_____

_____

Faculty Mentor(s):

_____

Associate Dean of Doctoral Studies

Copyright © 2012 Cassandra Gould

All rights reserved

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT……iv

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS……v

DEDICATION……..……..viii

INTRODUCTION……..1

CHAPTER

1. MINISTRY FOCUS……6

    My Journey

    History of Quinn Chapel

    Context of Jefferson City, MO

2. THE STATE OF THE ART……40
3. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION……52
4. METHODOLOGY…….....92
5. FIELD EXPERIENCE……..97
6. REFLECTION, SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION……..107

APPENDIX

A. PROJECT SERMON: NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH……117

B. PROJECT SERMON: DON'T COUNT ME OUT…….....124

C. PROJECT SERMON: YOU MIGHT BE NEXT……...131

D. PROJECT SERMON: UNBREAK MY HEART……..137

BIBLIOGRAPHY…….....159

ABSTRACT

BEYOND THE WALLS: THE POWER OF PROPHETIC PREACHING TO MOTIVATE A CONGREGATION TO DEVELOP SUSTAINABLE OUTREACH MINISTRY

by

Cassandra Gould

United Theological Seminary, 2012

Mentors

Harold Carter, Jr. D.Min.

Rudolph McKissick, Jr. D.Min.

The purpose of the this project was to assess the correlation between prophetic preaching and the implementation of outreach ministry programs at Quinn Chapel African Episcopal Church located in Jefferson City, Missouri. Over a specified period of time prophetic sermons were preached and a combination of qualitative and quantitative research tools, including pre and post-test, surveys, questionnaires and a focus group were utilized to measure the outcomes. The researcher found that during and immediately following the sermon series the congregation implemented outreach activities. The project affirmed the researcher's hypothesis that prophetic preaching can motivate a congregation to develop outreach ministry.

AKNOWLEDGMENTS

"I would have fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living?"[1] That is my testimony for my life and this process. Two months into this program I lost my rock, my mother Carrie Jefferson. I thought it would be impossible to go on but because of the ethos of perseverance that she instilled in me, quitting was not an option. I owe a world of gratitude for the compassion extended to me by my mentors Dr. Harold Carter, Jr. and Dr. Rudolph McKissick Jr. as well my peers in the Prophetic Preaching cohort. The very presence of such living preaching legacies was inspirational and motivating.

I am blessed to be a part of a loving and cohesive family that supports my ministry and various professional pursuits. My children, Daniel and Carnecia share in being the anchors of my support system. They continue to exemplify Christian discipleship. They along with my niece, Brittney who has allowed me to be her other mother are the catalyst for my quest for excellence. I am encouraged and motivated by the confidence that my siblings, Aaron, Alisa, and Clyde, along with their children, have in me. My family has encouraged me in immeasurable ways. I pray that my faith in GOD encourages and cultivates gifts in my two adorable grandchildren, London and Kaleb.

[1] Psa. 27:13 King James Version of the Bible.

This process has been enhanced by a very close-knit circle of preaching colleagues. They walk with me, pray for me, show up often in my "amen corner," and yes, admittedly on occasion, put up with me.

I am blessed with friendships that continue to leave an indelible mark on my life. While the list is exhaustive for the sake of brevity I will acknowledge a few of them. The colleagues that I am closest to are those that I have sojourned with at Eden Seminary. Russell Ewell, a brother and friend who accompanied me on those countless days and nights that I worked in the Emerson Library usually until well after midnight; my big sister in ministry, the Reverend Victoria Parker who has cheered for me and encouraged me when she should have been cheering for herself. It was at Eden that I also met the Reverend Rebecca Ragland and GOD allowed us to birth Women of the Cloth an ecumenical retreat and resource center for clergy women. I am grateful for the friendship of my classmate and sister in ministry, The Reverend Nokuphiwa Langeni, who joined me in a covenant to quit "dumbing down." Sister, "tick tock the game is unlocked."

I could not complete this dissertation on preaching without giving special recognition and gratitude to my fellow members of Kerygma Alpha Omega, also known as the "boys club," a self- proclaimed preaching fraternity: The Reverend Anthony L. D. "Bishop" Scott, and my friend and confidant, The Reverend Christopher L. Ware. Proverbs 27:17 says, "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another."[4]
We continue to make each other better.

[4] Prov. 27:17 New International Version of the Bible (NIV).

I am blessed to be a product of a stellar model of ministry mentorship. My passion for pastoral ministry has been nurtured by my "father in ministry." The Reverend Anthony Shannon Steele has helped to shape my understanding of who I am and what I am called to do. He consistently makes himself available to encourage and challenge me. He currently pastors on the other side of the country but continues to provide mentorship. His weekly check-ins over the last five years has assisted me in this journey. This project would not have been possible without the inspiration, cooperation, support, prayers and participation of the Disciples of Quinn Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church. They willingly provided assistance throughout the process. They graciously allowed me the time that was needed to travel, study and to complete the work. I am grateful and excited about the ministry journey we have begun as a result of this project.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project in loving memory of my parents Aaron and Carrie Jefferson, my grandparents Roberta and Cleophas Worthy and my uncle and aunt the Reverend Clyde and Mrs. Eloise Fluker. Each of them left an indelible mark on me as disciple of Christ. I am especially thankful to my mother, whose tenacity and belief in me let me know, "I could do all things through Christ which strengthens me."[5] They parented me and exemplified what it meant not just to believe in GOD but to live like people of GOD. I am thankful for the childhood worship experiences at Friendship Missionary Baptist Church in Demopolis, Alabama where I first gave my hand to the Lord, and Fourth Avenue Baptist Church where my uncle, the late Clyde Fluker, pastored with care and integrity in Birmingham, Alabama. These two faith communities were the first ones that I was a part of, and they nurtured me and showed me what it meant to live before GOD

[5] Phil 4:13 (NIV).

INTRODUCTION

The writer of this project believes in what the scripture refers to as the "foolishness of preaching."[6] It is through preaching that the writer maintains that transformation occurs. Preaching, particularly prophetic preaching has the ability to transform lives, systems, entities and communities. In the case of this project the writer's hypothesis states that prophetic preaching can motivate a congregation to act on behalf of others outside of their own social context and often beyond the walls of their faith community.

The writer not only sees outreach ministry as an opportunity for churches but moreover as a biblical mandate for the people of GOD to care for each other. This mandate has to be upheld by the leadership of churches, particularly the pastor. The writer believes the preached word is the most effective way to communicate this message. The results of this kind of intentional proclamation should be transformation of ideas, attitudes and activities.

The writer recognizes that similar to other organizations, local churches have their own culture. These cultures have been created over time and are often complex. Cultures are influenced by tradition and experiences that are shared by members of a group.

[1]1 Cor. 1:21 (New Revised Standard Version). NRSV

Black preachers are not a monolithic group, Black preaching in general has been steeped in the integration of biblical narrative and current events as experienced by people in the community. Ontologically the Black Church in America has a heritage of preaching liberation. The existence of slavery as part of the history of the United States created the need for an organized movement toward liberation for all. The church has been a place for the mobilizing of individuals willing to seek justice on behalf of others.

The oldest Christian denomination started by African-Americans is the African Methodist Episcopal Church (A.M.E.). The church technically began in 1787 as the Free African Society in Philadelphia. Richard Allen, the founding father of the church, started the church as a response to oppression in worship. He was among a group of Black parishioners at St. George Methodist Episcopal Church that were pulled from their knees while praying at the altar. He left and began the A.M.E. Church as an act of liberation so those of African descent would be free to worship.[7]The writer's context is an A.M.E. Church that was started by slaves. The writer has been an active part of the A.M.E. Church for more than thirty years.

The Black Church has been an integral part of the survival of Blacks in America. The prophet Isaiah seems to define the role of the prophet as one of liberator.

> The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; [2]to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; [3]to provide for those who mourn in Zion— to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory.[8]

---

[2]*African Methodist Episcopal Book of Discipline* (Nashville, TN: A.M.E. Publishing Board, 2008)
[3]Isa. 61:1-3, (New International Version).

While slavery is no longer legal in the United States, people continue to suffer its ill effects. Racism and other social injustices have created the "oppressed, brokenhearted and imprisoned." The voice of the prophet and the church are still needed as centers of influence to address the needs of the community.

The church has an opportunity and a responsibility to "set the captives free." The writer understands the church to be the "Body of Christ" that constantly extends and lends itself on behalf of others. "Others" includes those within the four walls of the church but is most certainly not limited to those who gather on Sunday. From the writer's perspective in order to "be the church" there has to be intentional activity that addresses the needs of GOD's people. If Christ is to be at work in the world it is through the activity of those who claim to be believers.

The writer's life has been lived to empower others. The writer is clear the ministry of Jesus Christ included and includes acts of liberation and empowerment. This project was conceived as a result of the integration of the writer's passion to help those who would be considered the least and the left out, and the absence of any identifiable outreach ministry at Quinn Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Jefferson City, Missouri. The writer has come to understand the disciples of Quinn Chapel are hospitable and open to helping others; however, most are not easily able to identify with the social needs of the community.

Lack and extreme economic hardship is countercultural to the world these second and third-generation college graduates inhabit. They initially appeared to believe most people shared their values, had similar education experiences and economic resources.

Jefferson City has a low crime rate and the "hood" is not as easily identifiable as it would be in a larger city. According to statistics as kept by the local police department

there were five shootings between 2009 and March of 2012, three of which were fatal. The city still has other social ills that plague communities across America. The dropout rate of African Americans is higher in comparison to their Caucasian counterparts. There are homeless, unemployed, hungry, neglected, addicted and abused people just like anywhere else. They need the church's help.

The writer seeks to reshape the culture of the church and to allow parishioners to become more aware of the world around them. The writer assumes that through the implementation of this model and ongoing attention to the prophetic that the eyes of the people will be opened. She prays as Elisha did in 2 Kgs 6: 17, "O Lord, please open his eyes that he may see. So the Lord opened the eyes of the servant, and he saw; the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha." In this case it is so they can see the people all around them that are in need and act on their behalf.

The initial chapter of this project identifies the focus of ministry that this model seeks to address. It allows the reader to understand the context of the writer. It also gives insight on the writer's personal and spiritual journey. It defines the ministry focus and articulates the objective of the project.

Chapter Two explores the State of the Art, which introduces similar models and analyzes current literature that relates to prophetic proclamation and social justice or outreach ministry.

Chapter Three presents the Theoretical Foundation from three perspectives; historically, biblically and theologically. The role of Prophetic Preaching in addressing and affecting social injustices is examined from each of these perspectives.

Chapter Four introduces the Methodology of the project. This methodology includes preaching, teaching and testing of attitudes pre-exposure and post-exposure. The experiences of preparing and utilizing the various forms of methodology are shared.

Chapter Five illustrates the Field Experience. It provides a detailed account of the results of implementing the model. This includes the details of the collected data, statistical information and recorded outcomes.

The writer concludes with Chapter Six in which the author reflects, summarizes and illustrates the conclusion of the overall experience of the project from conception to post-implementation. The author seeks to state the case for the necessity of the use of Prophetic Preaching in motivating the "body of Christ" and the need for the church to assume its rightful role as agent of change that is needed to address issues of social justice and inequalities. It is the belief and desire of the author to present a document that will become a resource for churches at large.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

The Black preacher is primarily a prophet who speaks GOD's truth to the people. The sermon, therefore, is a prophetic oration wherein the preacher tells it like is according to the divine Spirit who speaks through him or her.[1]The Prophetic Preaching for the Black Church in the Twenty-First Century focus group in which the writer is a member is focused on a theology of preaching. The group is led by Bishop Rudolph McKissick Jr. and Reverend Dr. Harold Carter, Jr. Members of the peer group have an affinity for preaching and believe that preaching has the ability to transform congregations, individuals and situations.

The objective of this project is to empower and motivate the parishioners of Quinn Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church located in Jefferson City, Missouri to implement and engage in sustainable outreach ministry. The primary tool or vehicle that the researcher uses is Prophetic Preaching. This area of ministry became a focal point because of the lack of outreach ministry at Quinn Chapel. Quinn is located in a community that has experienced a decline over the last couple of decades. Attendance at the church as also declined over the last fifteen years. Over time the church has created a

[1] James Cone, *Speaking the Truth: Ecumenism, Liberation and Black Theology* (Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1986)

culture where it appears parishioners are disconnected from the community in which the church is located. There is evidence that there is vague awareness of life outside of their own social and economic context, or "beyond the walls" of the sanctuary. The writer firmly believes Prophetic Preaching can shed light on various social plights. Effective Prophetic Preaching allows and often convicts a congregation to grapple with their responsibility to the greater community. It becomes a call to action for the church to address the issues by engaging in or developing ministry that responds to the needs of the community.

The researcher notes that this church historically was a prominent and vital part of the Black community in Jefferson City. It is the oldest historically Black institution in Jefferson City. Quinn is located in a historically Black neighborhood. The Jefferson City Urban Renewal plan that was introduced in the early 1960's was a factor in dismantling the neighborhood in which Quinn is located. It seems African Americans began to move and Black businesses were encouraged to relocate, with the promise of more contemporary commercial enterprises.

The Civil Rights Movement caused a change in the demographics of neighborhoods across the country. One result of the movement was the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This Act allowed Black people to become residents in areas that were previously off-limits to them due to segregation. Neighborhoods in Jefferson City underwent changes causing a considerable number of Blacks to move to other areas, west of the church. Currently less than a fourth of the parishioners live in the neighborhood near Quinn. Consistent with the national trend in cities across America, Quinn has become a commuter church.

The researcher sees a connection between the physical distances of parishioners from what has become known across America as the “hood.” This geographical distance has affected their social and emotional distance from problems in the community.

The “hood” is a term that normally refers to areas that are heavily populated by African Americans and are often economically oppressed communities. The historical relevance of and the relationship between the Black Church and The Black community is undeniable. One was essentially inseparable from the other. The geographical severing of the church and community members seems to correlate with the decline of the church’s participation in the community at large.

It is easy to remember GOD in the wilderness when one is in need of daily food or in Egypt where evidence of oppression is all around, but upon arriving in the “Promised Land” a form of social amnesia may occur. Christians of today, much like the ancient Israelites, seem to forget the origin of their journey. This amnesia could be the plight of the church at large, the Black Church, and many of those who commute weekly to worship in neighborhoods in which they no longer reside.

This distance has caused some churches to become unfamiliar with the pain and suffering of the greater society because there is not glaring evidence of societal ills in the pews. The individualistic approach to success in America has shaded the view of many in the Black Community, the church at large and specifically those in the pulpit. If Black preachers do not speak out on behalf of the Black blood that is shed in the streets of the urban centers of the United States, who will? Violence is just one aspect of what plagues the Black Community. The poor are still among us. Not only is it an opportunity for or a

responsibility of the prophetic preacher to speak “truth to power” outside of the church, it is also necessary to speak truth to the power and resources that sit in the pews on a weekly basis. The people need a prophetic voice to lead them toward understanding their responsibility to others beyond the walls of the church. The social climate of today presents an opportunity for the church at large to get back to the basics. Historically the community has depended on the church and this connection was exemplified in the Black Church. Black preachers have an incredible opportunity to reconnect the church to the community. This represents the rightful place of the church and the people of GOD. These actions are not required to resume a role of authority but to speak on behalf of those that are in need.

Even in smaller cities such as Jefferson City, Missouri there are still social ills. The problems of the community at large are prevalent and increasing. The need to give assistance to those in need is not antiquated but an ever present expectation from GOD. The church should not only have a role in but indeed a major responsibility to care for those in and out of the pews. The preacher is responsible for championing the cause and calling for the assistance of those who occupy the pews to assist in the effort.

MY JOURNEY

As I reflect on my childhood, I smile. I am proud of being a native of what I call the best state in the union, Alabama. I recognize that in general African Americans have suffered a great deal of pain and oppression as descendants of slaves.

However, my family represents the perseverance of enslaved ancestors that endured, survived, and in our case, thrived under unjust circumstances. This sense of defying the odds through exhibited faith in Jesus Christ is in my DNA.

We initially seem to represent the Meta-narrative of Blacks in the Cotton Belt of the south. The Essex family history in America originates with Grandma Joanna, my maternal great-great-great grandmother in Demopolis, Alabama. She had four sons by a slave owner, a very common story for those times, but then we "changed the game" (a phrase that I borrowed from a sermon Dr. Jasmine Sculark preached entitled, "Gamechangers."[1] Grandma Joanna was not enslaved, but was raised on a plantation. More than likely, her parents were slaves.

The infiltrator left her with more than four biracial children. He eventually also left his entire estate which included hundreds acres of land. This was a radical move for the post Emancipation Proclamation era between 1885 and the beginning of the 20th century. This meant that our family, even a couple of decades after slavery were landowners in Alabama. We grew produce en masse and had enough cattle to provide meat to be sold in the market place.

I am told that it was the Essex family that had the first television and telephone in Marengo county. It seems that when few of our Caucasian counterparts and none of the African Americans had automobiles we did. We owned and operated a store and gas station from the 1940's until the 1970's. John Essex, one of Joanna's sons was my great-great grandfather. His daughter Roberta was my muse, mentor and great grandmother.

---

[1] Jasmine Sculark, *Gamechangers*, preached at Central Baptist Church St. Louis July 2010.

She was the only grandmother I have ever known. My maternal grandmother, her daughter, died within weeks of my mother's birth.

John Essex was the first Black man to donate land to the State of Alabama for the purpose of building an adequate school for African American students. The school grew into a complete campus serving kindergarten through grade twelve. Today, John Essex is a High School in Demopolis, Alabama. It is difficult for me to tell who I am without telling this part of the story. This story represents my ontology. I am a person that has had difficulty in life for various reasons, usually involving me making a bad decision and I am the person that by the grace of GOD has been able to overcome and one who continues to change the game.

I like my mother, father and both sets of grandparents was born in Demopolis, Alabama, I am the oldest of four children. I was raised partially in a single family home. My parents separated before I became a teenager and though they never officially divorced, my father never moved back into the house. He moved out of state due to a job change and died when I was seventeen. I was cognizant of the void but had contact with him on a regular basis mostly via phone.

I suspect one thing that helped to keep my family grounded was our belief in GOD. I was also blessed to have the most amazing maternal grandparents. They were the glue for our family. I was the first grandchild and that gave me a special place in their hearts for the duration of their lives.

I know GOD because of how I was raised and what I experienced as a model for serving GOD and the people of GOD. Our family was blessed to have sufficient resources. Therefore it was very common for us to share. We provided clothes for other children that lacked adequate clothing. My mother, like my grandmother and now I, frequently had additional "members" of the family as long-term guests in the house. These members were not always blood relatives but were a part of the family because we included them and treated them as such.

There were a myriad of reasons that our door was opened, including job loss, evictions and tragedies such as fires. I remember a family of seven that included a grandmother, mother and five children lost their home in a fire; six of them came to live with us for at least seven months. I saw GOD and the kindness of GOD demonstrated through these acts of love that were extended by my family.

I had a formal and personal introduction to GOD through Jesus Christ at the age of ten at Friendship Missionary Baptist Church in Demopolis, Alabama. It was August 10, 1974. It was during summer revival and I had been sitting on the "mourner's bench" for the week. I that spent that week praying for GOD to reveal himself to me and on that Friday it seemed I was swept away by the Holy Spirit. I remember a feeling of dancing in my feet and before long I was at the front of the church, crying and saying, "I want to be saved."

I actually lived in St. Louis by this time and was on my annual summer-long pilgrimage to Alabama. This is a trip I took with my grandmother who we affectionately called Big Mama. These summer vacations would begin one day after the school year

was completed and last until Labor Day. I remember the end of that summer going home on the Greyhound bus with Big Mama and seeing a full moon. I recall hearing the audible voice of GOD saying, “Just as the moon is everywhere you are, I am with you also. You have been set aside. You are different.” What on Earth did that mean? I had no idea. I did agree with one thing I was different.

I was the “smart girl,” the teacher’s pet, which was beneficial in the classroom and detrimental on the playground. I am certain I could not fight but I could talk anyone down and even when I felt afraid I would stand my ground. I was the girl with the big eyes and the bad hair. A few years later I became the smart girl that got pregnant. I had my son just shy of my sixteenth birthday. I was cloaked in shame. My parents were separated, my mom was frustrated and my grandparents were devastated. I was sent to the “special school” for pregnant girls. This was a bad time in my life. My mother barely spoke to me during the pregnancy. I brought shame to the family.

My mother, true to her black semi-bourgeois upbringing, wanted me to go to Alabama, have the baby, and give it to a relative. Despite the fact that my father was no longer present, he overruled and stated that it was 1979 and not 1959. After my son was born the tension eased. My family was extremely supportive and made sure that I knew that school was more important than ever.

I continued to be a straight-A student and somehow managed to participate in extracurricular activities after returning to regular school and became the editor of the school newspaper, the Pioneer. My family instilled in me responsibility and accountability. I graduated, went to college, and had my second child while there. My

mom figured it was all in an effort to make her life miserable. Our relationship became tense even after my daughter was born. I added insult to injury when I initially refused to marry their father, because I realized we were like night and day and it was inconceivable to me to live a lie. It was during this time that my faith became pivotal to my existence. I was determined as a member of the family of "gamechangers" never to be a statistic. I would not have my children's lives represented by a number on some state welfare roll. I worked part time and went to school full time.

I majored in Journalism and Marketing and ended up in Finance. I prayed for health insurance for my children and was blessed to get a job at a major brokerage firm that worked around my schedule and offered insurance from day one. I was a gifted twenty-one-year-old with two children. My family and others had high expectations for me. I knew I had let them down. I was the only person in my age group that I was aware of that had children, and often felt isolated. I was an extremely active parent, participating in all of the children's extracurricular activities and being an integral part of the parent groups throughout their education.

My children went to a school in the suburbs. They were most certainly not just minorities, but also in the minority as Black children in a White school. I was president of a district-wide parent association and parent liaison to the school board for a few years. I was well respected and well received; however, as the youngest parent I still was a fish outside of the bowl. Though I had several lifelong friends, it was as if I really did not fit in anywhere. The few places that I really felt comfortable were places that I often did not have any thing in common with the other people there. I showed up to change the game.

I raised my children in church, the one place I knew I was at home. It was my favorite place to be. They both excelled in school. We were able to live seemingly the meta-narrative of most two-income families in America. We enjoyed family vacations, enormous and frequent family celebrations, and GOD allowed me to send both of my children and a niece through college.

I spent each summer going to Friendship Baptist Church in Demopolis for the first half of summer and Fourth Avenue Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama for the second half, where my uncle, the late Reverend Clyde Fluker, served as Senior Pastor. Some of my most prolific memories of childhood are those of getting ready for church, a process that began on Saturday. Preparing for church was a weekly ritual. Part of my experience in Alabama was to spend Saturday night getting my hair done. This meant sitting on the kitchen floor on Saturday night and having my hair pressed, a painstaking process that involved heating a metal comb on the stove and then using it to straighten my hair. I hated the process but loved the results. In St. Louis it would involve a Saturday morning trip to the beautician, Mrs. Charleston, who lived a few blocks away from Big Mama.

Sundays were filled with excitement and expectation. My older cousins in Demopolis and Birmingham treated me like a princess, fighting over who would dress me and do my hair. Depending on the house we left from in Demopolis we could walk across Highway Eighty to church. Friendship Baptist was located directly in front of our property on the other side of the highway. It was a weekly family reunion.

I have no recollection of the pastor, but there was and still to this day are a myriad of relatives that serve as deacons, Sunday School teachers, ushers and choir members. I entered the sanctuary expecting GOD to do something even when I was too young to articulate what it was.

The culminating event after church was family dinner. We would run out of space before we ran out of food. Often times in Demopolis, dinner was relocated outside on picnic tables under the tree to allow space for all those that showed up. I learned to love GOD, family and fellowship from these events. Sunday dinner in St. Louis involved fewer people as only my immediate family and our grandparents lived in St. Louis, but we looked forward to breaking bread together especially on Sundays. Most of those meals were held at Big Mama's house.

We were raised in the Missionary Baptist faith tradition. I do not remember thinking one way or another about the validity of a woman being called to preach. However, I do not remember ever seeing a woman preaching prior to moving to St. Louis. I worked diligently in the church as a child. I sang in the choir, ushered, and at age sixteen taught Sunday School. I looked forward to Baptist Training Union (BTU) every Sunday evening at 6:00 p.m. Church was an integral part of my life.

When adults did not show up for Bible Study, our pastor, the Reverend Elmer L. Austin, at First Community Missionary Baptist Church in St. Louis, Missouri, could rely on me to be present. There was never a discussion as a child or an adult if I would be going to church. It was a given. Over time, our little church of less than seventy-five members moved to a different neighborhood and the number of congregants greatly

diminished. My family continued to attend despite the dramatic decrease in membership. There were Sundays that our attendance was less than twenty-five.

My mother expressed concerned about the decline in youth activities. She had spent her entire life in a Baptist Church, but her real concern was that her children be raised in a Christian church, not necessarily a Baptist Church. I was aware of the A.M.E. Church and its place in Black history. My mother was invited by a friend to visit Tri-Union A.M.E. Church in St. Louis. I was seventeen. After several months mom asked if I wanted to visit with her and informed me that she was joining. I attended the worship service once and thought the worship was lively. My mother joined and took my siblings but said that because of my age I could make the choice as long as I went to church. I continued to go to First Community and a few months later I decided to also join Tri-Union.

I ushered, I sang in the Youth Choir and became a member of the Lay Organization. When I turned eighteen, the Lay Organization helped me to learn all about Methodist polity and the organization of the church. The more I knew the more I wanted to know. As I matured I worked in several capacities. I was Youth Director, Lay President, appointed to serve as Steward and Financial Secretary. The more I served the more I felt GOD was requiring of me.

It seemed that GOD was preparing me for itinerant ministry. I was a member of Tri-Union where I served gladly and with great pride in various capacities, including the aforementioned leadership roles for over eighteen years. My children were raised in that church and then one day while I was sitting in bed, GOD spoke in that same audible

voice that I heard as a ten-year-old on the Greyhound bus. I heard GOD say, “You are going to St. Peter.” I was startled but knew it was GOD. I was happy at Tri-Union. I was the chair of Church Anniversary, the Lay President, a Steward and Financial Secretary at that time. The congregation had seen some changes, particularly after the founding pastor, the Reverend Dr. Hercules Miles, was assigned to a new church. Despite the decrease in membership, the church still maintained a faithful presence and ministry.

I felt GOD instructing me to transfer after Church Anniversary. I shared this with my mother. I explained that, “Daddy told me I was going to St. Peter.” (My father was deceased and my mother was accustomed to and respected my willingness to let, “Daddy,” GOD lead me.) I waited a couple of months until near Annual Conference and shared with my pastor my plans. He was shocked but did not resist, and wished me well. I transferred in October of 2000.

I remember people commenting that I would be back because I was used to working at church and I would be relegated to the pews in a much larger congregation. On Sunday mornings at Tri-Union A.M.E. Church in the fall of 2000 there would be less than sixty people at church on average. St. Peter had two services and at the 11:00 a.m. service, the church was at capacity on the main level and in the balcony with chairs filling the aisles on both sides of each pew. The seating capacity was approximately 450 without the chairs. I heard what the naysayers were saying but I keep hearing the voice of GOD get louder and louder saying, “You are going to St. Peter.” I completed my duties as chair of Church Anniversary, asked for a transfer and left on good terms. My mother remained at Tri-Union. My son was away at college and my daughter went with me to St. Peter.

Oddly enough I had never worshiped at St. Peter, with the exception of events that pertained to the Annual Conference or an afternoon program. I showed up late one Sunday morning, not wanting to call any attention to myself and I left prior to the benediction. The next Sunday I joined. It was within the next few months that I allowed myself to be cognizant of the fact that I was called to ministry.

I arrived at Bible Study early one Thursday as I knew the associate minister, the Reverend Mark Williams, usually arrived early. I asked him one question, "How did you know you were called to preach?" He shared his call story and then asked, "Is there anything you want to share?" I replied, "No," and sat quietly until it was time for Bible Study. I was not ready to say aloud that I had been called. I knew I was supposed to be at St. Peter and it became a part of my call story. I was still a fish out of water and never felt at home. The dynamics of the church were such that everyone seemed to be related to someone else, and for the first couple of years I was continuously asked, "Whom are you related to, again?" When I answered, "No one," there was always a look of puzzlement on the other person's face.

Nevertheless, I was not left on the bench. In addition to my other duties at Tri-Union, I was an usher, and even when I was not in uniform I sat on the pew in front of the ushers, the second to last pew. My first day at St. Peter I sat on the fourth row and would never again be in the back of the church. When I arrived at St. Peter the only organization I joined was the Lay Organization. I knew most of the members in the organization, as I was President of the same organization at Tri-Union and also an officer of the Conference Lay Organization. Within four weeks of me joining, the pastor was having the Church Planning Meeting to set the calendar for the next year. I received a call

the day before asking if I would serve as the Church Anniversary Chairperson. I tried to decline but the pastor would not accept my refusal so I concurred. I felt this was confirmation that I did hear from GOD, as that was the last thing I did at Tri-Union.

Within a year I was President of the Lay Organization at St. Peter, a steward, and Financial Secretary. These were the same positions I held at Tri-Union. I continued to feel like a fish out of water but I knew it was where I was supposed to be. Four years passed and I had not articulated my call to ministry to anyone. I also had not asked anyone else about it, however I could still hear GOD calling and telling me he wanted more from me. I thought I could work it off. If I could have bargained with GOD, I would have performed every duty necessary to run a church with the exception of preaching. In 2005 it seemed that I ran out of places to run.

Seemingly in 2005 I started to hear the voice of GOD daily. I dreamed about accepting my call. On one hand, my life was great–or at least it was before the storms started to rage. I was in a long-term relationship with the person I knew was my soul mate. I had a new home, my business was thriving and my children were doing very well. My niece, Brittney, had been living with me for over a year. She graduated from High School and I was blessed to have the resources to send her to college. That was the only thing that remained the same by the end of the year. The bottom seemed to fall out of my business. Church had become hectic due to the residual effects of a former pastor. My long-term relationship was over–seemingly called off by GOD. A long-time friendship that I had maintained since high school evaporated.

Within six weeks of both of those occurrences, Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans. My daughter was a student at Xavier at the time. She escaped any injury, loss of residence, or personal effects but it reminded me that I was literally and figuratively in a storm and something had to change. I heard GOD even more. I was in such bad shape financially it seemed that all I could afford to do was pay attention. I was sleeping very little–it was as if GOD was chasing me.

I finally confided in a prayer partner, who was a pastor that I thought I had been called to preach. She responded, "I was wondering how long it would take you to answer." That was not the response I expected or wanted to hear. I was hoping she would ask me if I was sure and would give me a list of reasons why I was not qualified to be called by GOD.

Sometime later I recollect being in a meeting with my pastor, Reverend Anthony Steele, and he suddenly asked, "When are you going to quit trying to hide from GOD and accept your call?" I ignored the question and continued on as if nothing had ever happened. His reply was, "You can hide from me but not GOD."

I wondered, "Why would GOD tell other people?" After months of wrestling with GOD and myself on December 11, 2005 I was finally ready to answer. The first thing I did was to call the late Bro. Artemus Phillips. He was a church member that I served on the Stewardship and Finance Commission with and he had been like a grandfather to me.

I waited until 5:45 a.m. and told him what I was preparing to do, and to pray for me. He was delighted and said he knew that there was something special about me. I arrived at church at 6:30 a.m. The first service was at 7:45 a.m., and Reverend Steele

usually arrived early. In over five years I had only attended the 7:45 service twice, as I was not a morning person. I waited to meet with Rev. Steele and shared my call with him. He said GOD was pleased and he had been waiting. We prayed and had what would become one of hundreds of theological conversations. He invited me to address the congregation at the end of the worship service. I was frightened. I thought I would be rejected but seemingly I was accepted.

One month later, on the evening of Tuesday, January 24, 2006, I preached my initial sermon to a packed house. I wrote my sermon while sitting under the hair dryer at the salon, and to date the hair dryer still acts as an incubator for sermon ideas. The storm started to subside. I was licensed on February 23, 2006.

I began to prepare myself for the journey of ministry. My favorite part of church had always been the sermon. I would analyze everything from content to delivery even as a child. Reverend Steele instilled in all of his children in ministry the need for studying and giving adequate attention to sermon content and delivery. A common practice was that we would go to dinner and take turns preaching. He spent a great deal of time with us in a group setting sharing information that was necessary to preach and to pastor.

The A.M.E. Church has an internal system known as the Board of Examiners. It is a five-year process. I did not begin the process until January of 2007. I made sure I followed all of the rules. The Board is comprised of local pastors that act as instructors and a Dean that coordinates the process. It can be a grueling experience and it seems that there are more that do not make it through the process than there are of those that make it.

I showed up on time, did the work and matriculated through the process with ease. I was still acting in all of my leadership roles at church, which was becoming more and more difficult for reasons too complex to divulge.

I have the most remarkable mentor, my Father in Ministry, Rev. Steele. It was his love for the church at large, his love of GOD, pastoring and his care and concern for my ministry that initially kept me at St. Peter and in the denomination. I contemplated leaving town to attend seminary. I applied to seminaries all over the country and once again I heard from GOD. He seemed to indicate that I needed to remain in St. Louis, a place that I had been trying to leave for years. I made a decision to attend a school that I would not have considered because it was in St. Louis Eden Theological Seminary. I actually put my house on the market but then did not allow the realtor to show it. I applied to Eden on the last day applications were accepted.

I still remember deliberately arriving late hoping that the Admissions Representative, Diane Windler, would leave, as it was after hours on a Friday in the middle of July. Upon my arrival, I felt horrible because there she was waiting patiently after hours. She had a noticeable limp. I would later learn that she was battling a terminal illness. She gave me a tour of the campus. The kindness and patience that she exhibited made me feel welcome. Diane would become one of my favorite people, the "mother of our class." Ironically she lost her battle with cancer within days of our class graduating. She was able to see us through.

After spending most of my life as a fish out of water, I found my body of water at Eden. I was instantly a part of the community. I immediately experienced a sense of

belonging that is probably second only to going home to Alabama and being in the pulpit at Wayman and Quinn Chapel. Meanwhile things at church changed. Reverend Steele was appointed to serve in another conference.

I thought that was a good opportunity for me to find another church home. I did not want to give the impression that I was leaving because my pastor left. The truth was I only stayed at St. Peter because of him. I had been seeking GOD and asking if I could be relieved of the "assignment" to that church for two years prior to his arrival. He said, "Wait." I continued to wait and poured myself into my studies. I forged relationships with other pastors in seminary and often sought refuge at their churches for spiritual nourishment. While it was available at St. Peter, I was just not in a place to receive it. I continued to wait.

Finally GOD said, "You can be free," it was October of 2008. I went through all of the proper protocol and asked the pastor for a transfer. This was a considered unusual as I was a Licentiate and still in the ordination process. However I knew GOD had allowed me to leave and nothing would stop me. I had no idea where I was going.

I visited the Wayman A.M.E. Church with the intention of welcoming their new pastor and first lady and had no intention of joining, but it was there that my thirsty soul was filled. I was at home again, unlike my experience at St. Peter of always trying to prove that I belonged. I felt at peace. The community of believers at Wayman was and is to this day genuinely hospitable and treated me as if I had been born into the church. My mother thought I was crazy and referred to me as a gypsy, and begged me to promise her that I would never change churches again.

It was at Wayman that my ministry blossomed and it was from Wayman that I would be ordained and leave to begin my pastoral career. I was at peace. I excelled in the classroom and in the community within the seminary. I held several offices of leadership including being co-President of African and African American Students of Eden Networking Denominationally (AAASEND), the African American student affinity group.

I was also Student Cabinet Co-President. I currently serve on the Board of the Eden Black Alumni Association. My gifts for ministry were cultivated and my love for preaching nurtured at Wayman and at Eden. They both provided me with the assurance that there were places for odd fish like myself. I had finally found my own bowl of water. I graduated from Eden in May of 2010. I had the privilege of being the Senior Preacher, a coveted opportunity that is granted by faculty vote.

The A.M.E. system has two ordination tracks: one for itinerant Deacons and Elders and one for local ministry. I was on the itinerant track. I was ordained an Itinerant Deacon in September of 2009. The very next week I was sent out to my first charge, Watson Chapel A.M.E. Church in Paris, Missouri. It was a part-time congregation of approximately seventeen members–at least that was what I was told, but upon arrival I found nine. On most Sundays we averaged eleven in attendance, including my mom and me.

My mother transferred her membership to Watson. She rode with me every Sunday. It was a two-and-a-half hour drive from St. Louis. The congregation was easy to deal with and honestly did not require much pastoring. It seemed that they had grown

accustomed to pastors that drove in to preach and drove home. I would often go on Saturdays in an effort to be visible in the community and host events and services but very little changed. The population of Paris, Missouri is just over 1500 and less than ten percent of the population was African American.

My assignment there did teach me discipline in regard to sermon preparation and gave me the opportunity to prepare liturgy and construct programs. The most valuable lesson of all was to always love the people and allow them to reciprocate it. I was the liturgist, the soloist, preacher, the janitor and sometimes the cook. I loved the people but we all knew that it was more than likely that our relationship would only last one year. It was my last year of seminary. My time at Watson Chapel provided me with an opportunity to demonstrate my ability to maintain balance as I tried to pastor, be a student and run a business.

The church had been such an integral part of my life that I could not imagine not serving in some capacity in the church. Even part-time pastoring was a challenge but one I felt I was born to accept. My wonderful three years of seminary also coincided with the best three years of bonding with my mother that I had ever known. While my relationship with my mom had been hectic and filled with tension over the years, between 2007 and 2010 GOD allowed my mother and I to become friends in a way that I never imagined. She became the anchor of my ministry. Married preachers introduce their spouses and as a single person I was always proud to introduce my mother. There were very few preaching engagements that I had that she was not seated on the front row. We would spend hours laughing as I drove up and down the highway going to Paris, Missouri.

My training business also picked up during this time and I had more opportunities to provide training for companies throughout the country. Whenever I had regional clients that I could reach by car as opposed to plane, my mom traveled with me. She loved luxury hotel rooms, but was also honored to accompany me. My mother was proud of my accomplishments. I had spent my life trying to discern what would make my mother happy. I finally seemed to have succeeded. If my mother spent more than five minutes in the company of a stranger the next thing I knew they were walking over to me saying, "Hello Rev., your mother told me you were a pastor."

The final activities that my mother and I enjoyed would occur forty eight hours before her untimely departure. We went to church twice that day, as I had two preaching engagements and she was preparing to accompany me to my first Annual Conference as a pastor. I was scheduled to preach at Annual Conference, which at the time may have made my mother happier than me. My growing number of preaching engagements became a source of pride for her. It was my last Sunday at Watson Chapel.

My last day at Watson was Sunday October 17, 2010. I knew that I would not be returning to the church after Annual Conference. I prepared a huge meal for the congregation and issued each member, including my mother a certificate of appreciation. We left Paris with Mom seeming a little under the weather. She was quiet, which was unusual. I was scheduled to preach my Presiding Elder's Appreciation, another honor that excited my mother.

I preached and she smiled. She was happy to be acknowledged in my bio. I had no idea it would be not only the last time I could introduce her, but also the last time I

would see her. I took her home that night, walked her to the door and kissed her good night as I usually did. The next time I saw my mother was the evening of Tuesday, October 19, 2010 on a stretcher in a hospital emergency room. I walked in and the attending physician told me he had to "call it." My cheerleader, my anchor, my friend, my mom was gone. My life was turned upside down in an instant. I thought, "Really GOD, why now?" I was emotionally paralyzed and devastated to say the least. I remembered my mother's strength and my family's ethos of faith. The hand of GOD and the love of a few close friends got me through it.

I had begun the Doctorate of Ministry Program at United Seminary in Dayton, Ohio two months prior to this. I was eight days away from the opening of Annual Conference, where I was scheduled to preach at the noonday service and from making my first report as a pastor, eleven days from being fully ordained as an Itinerant Elder and twelve days from getting my next appointment. All of these events were associated with my mother. She had told seemingly everyone in the country about the upcoming events. I wondered, "How in the world can I get through this?"

I had never preached a funeral in my life. I had officiated one and was thankful to my father in ministry for making it mandatory to participate in funerals. However, nothing could have adequately prepared me to preach my mother's funeral. I prayed, "GOD, who should I have to preach mom's service?" I did not imagine it would or could be me. I heard the answer in my sleep as I literally had a dream about the sermon–almost verbatim. My family thought I had really lost it. Yet at the end they supported and trusted that I had heard from GOD. Their support, the grace of GOD and the prayers of many allowed all of us to get through this dramatic change in our lives. We were surrounded at

the funeral by a great cloud of Christian witnesses. My family and friends accompanied me to Annual Conference. By the grace of GOD I was able to preach without falling apart.

I will forever hold in my memory the support I received from my colleagues and friends during that time, especially the Reverend Christopher L. Ware who walked with me from the emergency room to the post burial grief, the students and faculty of Eden Seminary, my Presiding Elder The Reverend C. Jessel Strong, and his wife Arvella Strong. Once again I knew that GOD was with me. The love from all these sources was overwhelming. The pastor and members of Wayman also opened their doors and hearts to me. My church was more than two hours away from the metropolitan area, so where to have the funeral was open for discussion. Wayman made the building and all of their services available. It was symbolic of the love they continue to show me.

I attribute my sense of being a GOD centered, independent, strong, determined woman to my mother. She never sent us to church but took us and was engaged in the life of the church in a way that exemplified what discipleship really meant. All that I am and all that I hope to be is expressed in a love for GOD that I first saw at home. My ministry is stronger because of her being the anchor from day one.

I buried my mother on Monday, October 25, 2012 and Annual Conference began on Wednesday. I was appointed to Quinn Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Jefferson City, Missouri on October 31, 2010. These were major life changes that required quick adaptation.

I arrived at Quinn Chapel on Sunday, November 7, 2010. I had preached there once the previous year but still did not know what to expect. I knew the church was faced with moving and my primary task would be to facilitate the process of building a new edifice. I found a group of people that were hurt, guarded but courteous and hospitable. They had a great deal to be proud of because of the history of the church and the longevity of the church.

However, they only spoke with pride about the past and there was nothing that clearly identified them in their current state. They had church on Sunday mornings, occasional Bible Study and they went home. There was little evidence of the church having a positive effect on the community or even the parishioners. The congregation was primarily comprised of middle-class parishioners. The congregation seemed to be unaware of their resources, their ability to share with others, and the needs that existed outside the doors of the church.

History of Quinn Chapel

Quinn Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church located in Jefferson City, Missouri has been a fixture in the community since its inception. Quinn Chapel is one hundred sixty-two years old. The African Methodist Episcopal Church (A.M.E.) has an Episcopal form of government and is built on itinerant ministry. Currently the A.M.E. Church has churches on five continents. It was the first Christian denomination to be started by those of African descent in the United States. Quinn was begun under the evangelistic leadership of Rev. William Paul Quinn.

According to Quinn's written church history, "Paul Quinn planted forty-four churches and began forty-seven societies in a four year period between 1840 and 1844. These activities led him to becoming the fourth elected bishop of the A.M.E. Church."[2] Quinn is a part of the Missouri Annual Conference and the Fifth Episcopal District of the A.M.E. Church, where the current presiding prelate is the Reverend T. Larry Kirkland. The Fifth Episcopal District of the A.M.E. Church covers the largest geographical area in the states: fourteen states west of the Mississippi and churches on the continent of India. There are forty-one A.M.E. churches located in the Missouri Annual Conference.

Included in the history of the church was the following information:

> A group that included free Africans and slaves started Quinn Chapel. They gathered for meetings and formed a society under the banner of the A.M.E. Church. In 1852, the Society at Jefferson City officially became a church in the A.M.E. Connection with twenty five members. The property on which the original edifice stood was acquired by a freed American of African descent, Elijah Ramsey, who had earned the freedom of himself, his wife and son. His son became a trustee of Quinn Chapel and deeded to the Church a log cabin at 116 Miller Street this would become the place of worship, and subsequently Ramsey donated a property for a parsonage near the alley of the log cabin.[3]

In 1863 the members of Quinn shared their worship space with a group of Baptists while they sought a place where they, too, could worship. In 1864 the log cabin was replaced with a wooden frame building. In 1865 Mr. Richard Baxter Foster, the first principal of Lincoln Institute (the predecessor of Lincoln University) entered into an arrangement with Quinn Chapel to hold classes in the church. By 1876 the Church had grown significantly and had become a thriving and integral part of the African American

[2] History of Quinn Chapel, as found in the office and records of the Church Secretary.

[3] Ibid.

community of Jefferson City, and the wooden frame building was replaced by a modern brick structure. By the middle of the Twentieth century, Jefferson City determined that it needed to build a highway to connect it to the rest of the region, and Quinn Chapel was relocated to its current location at 529 Lafayette Street.

The present edifice was built in 1955, and a parsonage was purchased on Dunklin Street across from the campus of Lincoln University. It is noted in the recorded history of the church that even during the relocation process Quinn continued its tradition of support for the community, especially to the college students. Jefferson City is a city that sits high there are many steep hills. The campus of Lincoln University sits high on a hill and Quinn was called, the "Church at the Foot" as it is located near the bottom of the hill the campus sits on. "The church at the foot" became known for the chili suppers that were held during exam time to provide students with meal and a place to eat and study.

Lincoln University is a Historically Black College and was one of few HBCUs located west of the Mississippi. Many African Americans living in the Midwest chose Lincoln as their school and then settled in Jefferson City. Jefferson City has historically had a stable economy and a number of white-collar jobs due in part to the fact that it is the Capital of Missouri.

Throughout the history of Quinn Chapel Lincoln students have filled the pews. There has never been a time since the inception of Lincoln that students, faculty and or staff from the University have not been members of Quinn Chapel A.M.E. Church. The relationship has continued throughout the trajectory of both of the institution's histories.

Seemingly in the last ten years the number of students attending Quinn, as well as the number of members, has dramatically increased. The church also flourished in the mid to late 1990s under the leadership of Reverend Mark Kelly Tyler (the most popular pastor in recent history, based on the comments on the congregation).
The church had two services, one of which was populated by more than one hundred students and was visible in the community because of outreach programs and its media ministry, which included a television ministry. This was in stark contrast to what I would find, as of November 2010.

There were less than five college students that called Quinn home when I arrived. There was one service that was attended by less than forty people on average. Itinerant ministry leads to many changes in the life of a church. Pastors have different visions and sometimes the congregation is not invested in particular traditions or activities enough to maintain a specific focus. One of the pitfalls of the itinerant ministry is that there is normally frequent "changing of the guard." The longstanding relationship that Quinn has had with the community and with Lincoln University has changed over time.

One consideration is that the neighborhood that the church is located in has been a Black community for many decades. The original location of the church is within six blocks of its current location. The foot was populated by residential and commercial property. Currently there is an open field of land that sits directly across from the church and two additional empty plots of land that are across from Lincoln University. The empty lots represent Black businesses that are now just memories in the minds of those over fifty years old. According to archives held by some congregants, there were over

twenty Black businesses located in this area. A few of the parishioners owned one of businesses. The businesses in the area included gas stations, stores and restaurants.

These same archives contain information about the urban renewal plan of 1962 that offered the owners money to relocate. The researcher located a copy of the document and it indicated that there were plans to build additional housing and a shopping mall to provide additional resources for the members of the community. The plan was the equivalent of a non-negotiable check. Fifty years later the land is vacant with the exception of one surviving business, a barber and beauty salon. This disenfranchisement caused some that lived in the area to move further west in neighborhoods that were newer and offered the normal amenities such as grocery stores and restaurants.

In its one hundred sixty-two year history Quinn has had fifty-four pastors. Over time, with different administrations the priorities and vision of the church have changed. They are seemingly at a point of re-envisioning what it means to be Quinn Chapel A.M.E. Church in Jefferson City, Missouri. Under the leadership of the writer, the church has realized that there are additional opportunities for ministry as it pertains to the community.

Members have expressed an interest in not being just a “Sunday morning church.” A significant factor in the history of the church is that it is in the middle of a relocation process. This will be the third move in its history. The last move was in 1955. The church relocated due to the implementation of an expressway, the Rex Whitson Express Way. Ironically, the church has now been asked once again to relocate due to the expansion of the same Highway. The church purchased eight parcels of land in December of 2011. The

official groundbreaking ceremony for was held in June of 2012. The construction of the new building has begun and is expected to be completed by June of 2013.

The new building will be approximately one-and-a-half blocks from the current location. It will be located on the same street as the existing building. This area, in which African Americans have historically lived, is important to Quinn. Education is also a high priority at Quinn. Prior to the current mandate in the A.M.E. Church for pastors to have Masters level seminary degrees, Quinn had long been accustomed to having educated clergy at the helm.

Historically, at least since the early 1900's (per the demographic history as recorded in the office of the church secretary), the average education of a parishioner at Quinn has been at least an undergraduate degree. This is more than likely related to the connection that Quinn has maintained with Lincoln University, a historically Black college over the years. It seems that most African Americans in Jefferson City were born there or went to Lincoln and never left Jefferson City.

The congregation of Quinn is primarily comprised of those with professional employment, including teachers, attorneys, physicians, and of University personnel. In addition to its ties to Lincoln University, the families of Quinn maintain or have maintained strong ties to the African American and larger community because of their business presence. Historically, pastors of Quinn are usually involved with the broader church community in the area and are often invited to participate in and host various ecumenical events.

Based on statistics from surveys done on the membership within the last six months, there are one hundred six members of Quinn Chapel, eighty-five of who are over age eighteen. Ninety percent of the members have been at Quinn for more than ten years. The average member age is sixty; twenty eight percent are men. Ninety percent of the members over age twenty-five have at least a Bachelor's degree. Forty percent of the members have Master's level degrees and twenty percent of the members have a Ph.D. or other advanced level graduate degree.

According to numbers provided by the 2000 census the average household income in Jefferson City is $39,628.[4] It is hard to determine the household income of the parishioners, as this question was not asked. However based on the jobs and professions the congregants hold it would be safe to assume most would fall above the national and local average income as noted above. Forty five percent of the members are lifelong A.M.E. members. Currently the racial mix of members is ninety nine percent African American.

Context of Jefferson City, MO

Jefferson City is the state capital of Missouri. It became the state capital in 1821. St. Charles, Missouri was initially the state capital. Geographically, Jefferson City is located almost an equal distance from St. Louis and Kansas City, the two largest cities in the state. It is approximately 133 miles from St. Louis and 157 miles from Kansas City. Initially known as Lohman's Landing, it was merely a trading post along the Missouri

[4] United States Census Bureau, "State and County QuickFacts: Jefferson City (city), Missouri," United States Census Bureau. http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/29/2937000.html (accessed 2011).

River and was developed into a city after becoming the capital.[5] It was incorporated as a city in 1839 and was named after President Thomas Jefferson. The two most important buildings in Jefferson City seem to be the capital building and the prison or state penitentiary.

According to information housed in the Cole County Historical Society, the son of Daniel Boone designed Jefferson City. Seemingly Jefferson City has a history of being a city in tension. Missouri was literally and figuratively in the middle of the Civil War, not just geographically, but also ideologically. Missouri was a slave state on the Confederate side of the conflict.

According to information provided by citydata.com and the Historical Society, "Jefferson City was incorporated in 1839 and one year later the population was 1,174 of which 262 were slaves. During the Civil War Missouri wanted to pull out of the Union it was later voted upon during a convention in Jefferson City that Missouri would remain in the Union, but the Governor of the state did not want to comply."[6]

The Governor, Claiborne Jackson, decided to fight back against the federal ruling and the law of the land at the time, the Emancipation Proclamation. History records, "He recruited 50,000 volunteers and marched to join Confederate soldiers in Booneville, MO."[7] The Union soldiers prevailed as they in essence took back Jefferson City. African Americans in Jefferson City have historically been in the minority and that still

[5] History of Jefferson City recorded by Cole County Historical Society, Jefferson City, MO

[6] City of Jefferson, "History/Heritage of Jefferson City," City of Jefferson Online. http://www.jeffcitymo.org/main/historyheritage.html (accessed 2012).

[7] Ibid.

remains today. According to African American residents and some race relations in the capital city have historically been a source of tension. According to the available census data that still showed the information from 2000, African Americans represent less than fifteen percent of the overall population of Jefferson City.

The population of Jefferson City according to that data in 2000 was 39,274.[8]After surviving the tensions of the past Jefferson City has become a viable place to live. Three major hospitals were built in the 1900's and transportation was improved between Jefferson City and the rest of the region.

There are at least thirty churches in Jefferson City proper. Those churches more or less represent mainline denominations. There are other non-denominational and non-Christian churches that data was not available for. These churches include Missionary Baptist, Progressive Baptist, Southern Baptist, Lutheran, United Church of Christ, United Methodist, African Methodist Zion, Disciples of Christ, Catholic and Church of GOD in

[8] United States Census Bureau, "State and County QuickFacts: Jefferson City (city), Missouri," United States Census Bureau. http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/29/2937000.html (accessed 2011).

Christ. Quinn is the only A.M.E. Church in the city. There are at least eight churches, including Quinn, that are primarily comprised of African American members.

There is evidence that the racial polarization that has been historically part of Jefferson City still exists. While there is a spirit of ecumenism among some of the church leaders that crosses denominational and racial lines, there is still a divide. The churches "uptown" are the white churches, and the African American churches are primarily located on the East end of town, in or near the area Quinn and Lincoln University are located.

CHAPTER TWO

STATE OF THE ART

There are a myriad of books written about the effects of preaching, including those that seek to identify and define the genre of preaching known as prophetic preaching. The phrase “speaking truth to power” is very common among social justice activists. A true prophet has to be willing to speak truth. Prophetic preaching is proclamation that challenges and convicts the powers that be. It is countercultural and the message is rarely popular. A prophetic preacher is on a specific mission for a specific time and that is evidenced in the message they preach. Prophetic preaching calls out evil, as well as truths that are unsettling and tend to cause discomfort. A general goal of prophetic preaching is to call forth action that will result in a new way of being. Prophetic preaching can be political but doesn’t have to be, and being political does not equate to being prophetic.

If one examines the biblical narrative it stands to reason that prophetic preaching is commissioned by GOD, as a response to the cries of the people of GOD. When Moses was called it was because GOD responded to the cries of the people. The biblical narrative records this kind of call and response to human conditions that seem to involve injustices and oppression. GOD sends a prophet to respond to the cries.

"GOD said I have seen the affliction of my people and have heard their cry…."[1] GOD raises up a prophet speak truth to institutions, individuals, and systems of power. The often-reluctant prophet hears from GOD prior to responding to the oppression.

In order to understand the power of prophetic preaching one must first understand how preaching has shaped the culture, and the theology of preaching, particularly in the context of the African American or "Black Church." Preaching allows the ancient text to come to life. It takes that which was written in black and white and spoken in Hebrew and Greek and brings it into 3-D with surround sound. People are drawn in and should be able to find themselves in the sermon.

Preaching is the focal point of worship in the Black Church, and the part to which the pastor is apt to pay the most attention. While homiletic styles vary, sermon structure is a fundamental aspect of preaching. There are a myriad of options for structuring a sermon, but they all point to the fact that sermon preparation and presentation are intentional. This review of literature explores books that deal solely with the art of preaching, what preaching has meant to the church at large historically, prophetic preaching, preaching instruction, and books that analyze preaching in the African American context. These works are reviewed in light of the results and the opportunities for preaching to connect congregants to the plights that exist beyond their walls. The initial book reviewed was *Preaching* by Fred Craddock.

---

[1] Exod. 3:7, (New Revised Standard Version of the Bible). (NRSV)
Unless otherwise noted all scripture references are from the NRSV.

This book provides a basic understanding of preaching as an act, the aspects of preaching and its connection to the theology of those that preach and those that listen. Craddock indicates that, "Preaching is understood as making present and appropriate to the hearers the revelation of GOD."

Craddock expounds, "Revelation is used not in the sense of content, although content is certainly there, but in the sense of mode." In an effort to illustrate the ethos of preaching in general speaking to how the words for a sermon are derived, Craddock speaks about how "GOD breaks the silence with the Word." He goes on to describe a sermon as "a word tossed against the clear glass of silence behind which people sit waiting and asking, 'Is there any word from the Lord?"[2]

While Craddock's primary focus is on the mechanics of preaching, even the above description of the sermon is an accurate analogy and holds metaphoric truth as one describes the people in the community that sit crying, but there appears to be a glass barrier between suffering and the church. They can see the church on almost any street corner in urban areas throughout the United States, but the barrier seems to prevent the church from hearing their cries and the people from hearing from the Lord on their behalf.

Craddock's definition allows us to experience the power of preaching to break down walls as well as to break the silence that the church has been holding on to. The writer has a passion for preaching and caring for GOD's people. She is committed to the academic, spiritual and homiletic preparation that is required.

---

[2] Fred Craddock, *Preaching* (Nashville, TN; Abingdon Press, 1985)

She believes a preacher has to be intentional to adequately hear from and speak on GOD's behalf and moreover, to be heard by the people of GOD. Craddock's work helps one to understand that the sermon is not an isolated episode but is intertwined with the text and the preacher.

The writer also analyzed styles of preaching as it pertained to the Black Church historically and in postmodernity. The primary resource used for this research was *Preaching With Sacred Fire: An Anthology of African American Sermons, 1750 to Present.* Frank Thomas and Martha Simmons coedited this thorough chronological and diverse collection of sermons by some of the greatest and most effective Black Preachers that have ever lived. The book included such historical figures as Jarena Lee, who history records as the first female preacher of the A.M.E. Church, Sojourner Truth and Henry McNeil Turner. [3]

From the 1700s to current day the witness of those that have been known to preach prophetically is illustrated in this work. Frederick Douglass' famous *What, to The Slave Is the Fourth of July,* points to the church and its power to speak out on behalf of those early American captives, Black slaves. Douglass states, "The American Church is guilty, when viewed in what it is doing to uphold slavery, but it's superlatively guilty when viewed in connection with its ability to abolish slavery."[4]
The church, in the writer's opinion, is still guilty of silently upholding the systems that keep the community in chains. Silence can be interpreted as agreement.

---

[3] Frederick Douglas, *What to the Slaves Is the Fourth of July*. Edited by Martha Simmons and Frank Thomas in *Preaching With Sacred Fire: An Anthology of African American Sermons, 1750 to The Present* (New York: WW. Norton, 2010), 135-160.

[4] Ibid., 153.

In addition the church continues to shirk its responsibility by not acknowledging the growing number of injustices that plague our community. Thomas and Simmons' work demonstrates the breadth of Black preaching and seems to indicate the power throughout history for preaching to effect society in tangible ways.

Thomas and Simmons outline several styles of preaching. The one that resonates most with the researcher is "social activist preaching." According to the editors the purpose is:

> To induce the spiritual, political and cultural underpinnings for liberation struggles, including the prophetic voice of social critique and redress. It is principally projected to a wider American culture and world but also serves as an inner critique of the Black Church and Black culture. The social activist preaching agenda includes poverty alleviation, racial and gender equality, and all peace, justice and economic struggles.[5]

This is prophetic preaching. It is often thought that prophetic preaching only presents a message to those outside of the church. The researcher understands that prophetic preaching is truth telling and the truth has to be told inside and outside the walls of the church.

As the writer researched models she looked for literary models that depicted prophetic preaching and its dynamics but also looked for models that would offer a template for praxis. The writer's primary model for ministry that reflects the ecclesiastical mission of working on behalf of others is found in her own denomination, the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The A.M.E. Church was found out of sociological protest. The founders of the denomination found themselves shut out by the church and knew this was antithetical to the biblical model of being church. The mission

---

[5] Ibid., 10.

of the A.M.E. Church "is to minister to the social, spiritual, and physical development of all people." The vision in a nutshell is "to seek out and save the lost and to serve the needy."[6] The expectation is that on each level this is how the church at large will function. The researcher feels strongly that Quinn has failed to fully carry out this vision. The lack of outreach ministry is a result of the vision not being followed.

The researcher has been extremely informed and influenced by the works of the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference, a social justice conference she has attended and participated in for five years. This conference is named for the Reverend Samuel DeWitt Proctor, the late homiletic genius, icon of prophetic preaching and professor. The Proctor Conference was begun in 2004.

According to its website its mission is as follows:

> to nurture, sustain, and mobilize the African American faith community in collaboration with civic, corporate, and philanthropic leaders to address critical needs of human and social justice within local, national, and global communities. SDPC seeks to strengthen the individual and collective capacity of thought leaders and activists in the church, academy, and community through education, advocacy, and activism.[7]

The researcher's attendance at The Proctor Conference allowed her to identify her own prophetic voice as a preacher. The conference is the brainchild of three iconic representatives of the Black Church: Reverend Dr. Jeremiah A. Wright, Rev. Dr.

---

[6] African Methodist Episcopal Church General Secretary/Chief Information Officer, "About Us," African Methodist Episcopal Church. http://www.ame-church.com/about-us/mission.php (accessed 2012).

[7] Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference, "About Us: General Information," Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference, http://www.sdpconference.info/index.php?option=com_k2&view=itemlist&layout=category&task=category&id=11&Itemid=294 (accessed 2012).

Freddie J. Haynes and Rev. Dr. Iva E. Carruthers. The conference acts as a vehicle for mobilization for those called to prophetic ministry and for community partners that engage in the work of social justice. The seminarian components provided the researcher with a broad range of possibilities for the praxis of prophetic ministry and preaching.

The writer was also impressed by the work of Robert M. Franklin, whose book *Crisis in the Village: Restoring Hope in African American Communities* deals with the crisis that has occurred in the three major institutions of Black communities. He identifies those institutions as the Family, the Church and the School. According to Franklin the crisis in the church is one of mission.

What most impressed the writer was the book did not stop at identifying the problems but also offered strategies to assist in addressing and solving the problems.[8]Franklin outlines a five-phase model for dealing with the church's failure to respond to the cries of the community. He describes it as "framework for faith based public ministry." According to Franklin the model allows for a "developmental stage, a diagnosis function (beneficial to the clergy and the congregation) and a discernment tool" by which the gifts of those involved are discovered and effectively utilized.

Phase one of Franklin's model is Charity. This phase allows for providing immediate relief of suffering as related to basic necessities such as clothing and food. Phase two is "The Ministry of Transitional Support."

This phase is focused on long-term but not permanent results. Franklin makes reference to counseling that may be needed when people are experiencing transition. This

[8] Robert M. Franklin, *Crisis In The Village: Restoring Hope in African American Communities* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007)

is an example of this would be a family moving from a shelter to an apartment. This phase seems to offer intangible support. The third phase is "The Ministry of Social Service," which allows a congregation to explore the provision of ongoing social services.

This can include fee-based services such as childcare, job training, tutoring and health-related services. This is a phase in which those with specific types of professional or academic training could utilize their gifts to assist with the establishment and operation of specific kinds of services. Phase Four is "The Ministry of Justice." Franklin states, "When congregations move from providing services, support, and charity to people and focus upon representing the ends of people to the public systems and structures of power, they have moved into the ministry of justice or advocacy." The fifth phase is the "The Ministry of Transformation," which Franklin refers to as a "comprehensive community transformation and development."[9] This is the phase in which ongoing efforts are solidified as integral parts of the community inside the church and "beyond the walls." The writer recognizes that this model represents the ideal goal of the project in which she is engaged, and realizes that it is an overnight process.

The researcher is aware that there are a tremendous number of working models that have utilized prophetic preaching as its primary methodology to develop social justice and outreach ministries, many of which are iconic. However, the researcher chose to include an example of a working model that may not be known beyond its current geographic area. It was developed in a ministry context of similar population size. In addition she looked for a model that would represent outreach ministry in a church

[9] Ibid., 137-164.

with a pastor who has served less than five years. Ideally the pastor would be considered a prophetic preacher.

These similarities would allow the researcher to analyze a model that could be used as a template at Quinn. The model chosen was Christ the King United Church of Christ located in Florissant, Missouri, a suburb of St. Louis, Missouri. It represents a model that is still in process and similar to the context of Quinn Chapel. It is a church in the middle of transition, and prophetic preaching has been a catalyst for spiritual healing within the boundaries of the congregation and for the development of ministry "beyond the walls."

Christ the King is a predominantly black congregation of approximately one hundred disciples. The church is 156 years old and is one of a few congregations that successfully transitioned from a predominantly white congregation to a predominantly black congregation without ever closing its doors. The Reverend Traci Blackmon was installed as pastor and teacher of Christ the King three years ago after an eighteen-month pastoral search that was initiated as a result of a painful church split. Reverend Blackmon is the first female pastor and the fourth African American pastor in the church's 156- year history.

According to Rev. Blackmon there were twenty-five members that remained after the split. The congregation is educated and financially stable. The church is located in a suburban area that has experienced rapid declination, and most of the members no longer live in the area.

Rev. Blackmon indicated her first priority was to facilitate healing by creating space for the members to acknowledge and grieve their losses as a congregation. Additionally, she sought to provide them with evidence of GOD's presence in their midst and motivate them to celebrate.

She has championed many causes in the greater community and acts as a prophetic voice. As many prophets do she often stands alone. The researcher believes that Rev. Blackmon's intentional care and concern for the people she shepherds has been a catalyst for healing within the congregation. This has allowed them to see beyond their own needs and work toward helping those in the community. Her ethos for church growth is based on her belief that change occurs in the world when the body of Christ ministers to the community with compassion. Outreach has been a consistent priority for the ministry at Christ the King.

Some of the measurable results include the establishment of a community computer lab, which allows the public to schedule time on a computer or to drop in during office hours. Currently there are nine computers, a printer and a copier all designated for public use. Free computer classes are also provided. Christ the King is a hosting site for free GED classes. These classes are held four days a week during the school year.

The church also provides free computer classes, tutoring and chess classes as well. Last year, the church also established a community garden, which allows members of the congregation and the community to work in conjunction with one another. The newest addition to Christ the King's community outreach is presence of a community based

catering company. The commercial kitchen of the church serves as an incubator for this new business. The caterer has entered into a two-year contract for use of the kitchen to develop and pursue their dream, without overhead. The only requirement is that the company tithes to the church from its business revenue over the next two years. The church's goal is to assist the company with building reputation and clientele prior to launching an independent business.

The church also houses a mentoring program that attracts approximately 300 girls a month to the church for mentoring sessions. The church offers opportunities for older adults as well. Currently they can participate in weekly exercise and bridge classes, as well as a monthly Bible study. Reverend Blackmon's commitment to the community and the congregation's support of her vision is evident in the results. The church now tithes ten percent of its revenue into mission-related projects.

The church is engaging in voter registration activities. Rev. Blackmon is also in the process of rolling out a statewide voter mobilization effort, "Souls to the Polls," an ecumenical campaign to encourage churches all over Missouri to provide transportation to members of the community at large on Election Day. Reverend Blackmon joins the many men and women that have championed the cause of Christ to minister to the "least of these" through prophetic preaching over the trajectory of time.

This model provides experiential evidence that prophetic preaching can shape a congregation in tangible ways. It also increases the researcher's belief in the power of preaching to motivate a congregation as it pertains to providing ministry in and to the community. There has been a noticeable addition of community oriented activities

present at Christ the King under the leadership of Rev. Blackmon. The researcher maintains that there is an undeniable correlation to prophetic preaching and transformation. Prophetic preaching has been one of the vehicles that Rev. Blackmon has utilized to transform the congregation. A congregation has to be transformed internally prior to attempting to assist others in the process.

This congregation appears to visualize themselves and their ability to affect change in a positive manner. The work speaks for itself. Quinn Chapel has a similar opportunity and signs of this type of internal transformation are evident. The researcher sees a parallel in the ecclesiology of Rev. Blackmon and her own ecclesiology. The story of Christ the King encourages the researcher to continue this quest beyond the length of the project.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Biblical Foundations

Throughout the Bible are recurring themes of the necessity of social justice and benevolence on the part of humankind toward each other. The book of Deuteronomy in the opening verse of Chapter 10 asks the question that is asked in Micah 6:8: "What does the Lord require of you?" It is a question posed of Israel. The template for how to respond seems to appear in verse 17-18: "For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe. He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing."[1] This passage illustrates who GOD is and what the attributes and actions of GOD are which include working toward justice for those who are socially and economically marginalized, in this case the widows and the orphans.

[1] New Revised Standard Version of the Bible (NRSV)
Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are taken from the NRSV.

This motif appears throughout the canonical text. It appears as a warning as well as instruction from the Prophets to Israel. Jesus advocates for the poor throughout the New Testament. While it is a commonly held belief as well as a widely accepted biblical interpretation that Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed because of sexual immorality, Ezekiel seems to dispute this or offer a different perspective. He states, "This was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy. They were haughty, and did abominable things before me; therefore I removed them when I saw it."[1] The writer shares the prophet's viewpoint that communities especially communities of Christian believers have a responsibility to aid and assist those in need.

The hundreds of texts that speak to assisting the needy, especially the women and children as illustrated by the commonly used phrase the "widows and fatherless," seem to suggest that there is an anthropological responsibility that humans have for each other. Our inability to care for and provide for the needs of those that are economically disenfranchised appears to put all of humanity at risk.

While some texts such as those aforementioned give the instruction and indicate the risk for failing to carry those instructions out, others exemplify how to seek justice and the effect it has on the community at large. The failure to do so is not only exemplified by Sodom and Gomorrah but by many churches in postmodern culture. The Bible is clear about the mandate to work on behalf of others. Throughout the biblical narrative GOD calls forth a prophet to speak on behalf of the hurting community.

[1] Ezek. 16:49-50

These proclamations are biblical models of prophetic preaching that empower people to work on behalf of those "beyond the walls." These walls include social, economic and often geographic locations.

One less obvious example of prophetic preaching occurs in the Book of Esther. Historically, Esther has been depicted as the heroine in the book. However Esther only acted after the "prophet" Mordecai spoke "truth to power" and caused Esther to peek "beyond the wall" of the Palace and to look at the circumstances of the Jewish Community. This was Esther's community but her social and geographical location was different than the other members of her community.

The message of prophets and other proclaimers of truth are often rejected. A popular saying of an unknown origin simply says, "You cannot handle the truth." Esther reacted like many parishioners. She considered her own comfort level and what her personal risk would be if she acted on this request. The "what about me" and the "sacrifices I would have to make" is a common excuse for the church's lack of response narrative GOD calls forth a prophet to speak on behalf of the hurting community. These proclamations are biblical models of prophetic preaching that empower people to work on behalf of those "beyond the walls" of their social, economic and often geographic location.

Mordecai's initial message was delivered in written form as he sent the decree via Hathach. He asked Hatach to explain to Esther the seriousness of the situation and the jeopardy that the community was in.

Mordecai tells Hathach "explain it to her and charge her to go the king to make supplication to him and entreat him for her people."[2] Esther's response is not shocking.

The message of prophets and other proclaimers of truth are often rejected. A popular saying of an unknown origin simply says, "You can't handle the truth." Esther reacted like many parishioners. She considered her own comfort level and what her personal risk would be if she acted on this request.

The "what about me" and the "sacrifices I would have to make" is a common excuse for the church's lack of response to the community. After all, the church's budget has to be made, there are parishioners inside the four walls that need assistance and the list grew from there. Mordecai's closing argument in his sermon is the text that becomes the catalyst for the acts and legacy of Esther, "Do not think that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. For if you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter, but you and your family will perish. Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for such a time as this."[3]This had to be a sobering fact for Esther.

Esther is an Old Testament book that is classified as one of the "Five Scrolls," a small but complex book steeped in irony and profundity. This book, like many of its Old Testament counterparts, provides the readers a glimpse of the daily practices of antiquity for those born in the Jewish tradition. It is the quintessential Jewish book in the Christian Bible.

---

[2] Est. 4:8b.

[3] Est. 4:13-14.

Carey Moore suggests the book was "one of the most popular books among Jews during the Middle Ages." He further states that it was also the source of controversy "for several hundred years." According to Moore the controversy was based on questions regarding its "inspiration and canonicity." Moore adds, "the canonicity was contested by members of both religions Jewish and Christians."[4]It is easy to see how the book would have been and can still cause some anxiety among Christian Bible scholars and readers. It is book that is in contrast with itself. Each of the themes or characteristics of the books seem to have an ironic or antithetical counterpart. The book does not mention GOD. However, it should be evident that a divine force was at work. A secular view would involve irony but in the body of Christ we expect the unexpected.

One illustration of this is the shame that is bestowed upon Vashti for what she refused to do, as she dared break a social norm, juxtaposed with the honor that Esther earns for what she eventually does which also is a countercultural act. Timothy Laniak suggests that this is actually a socio-literary pattern, common in the Bible and explicit throughout the book of Esther. Laniak says when discussing the book, "The acquisition of honor following a state of shame seems to be an organizing element of the pattern." He further indicates, "This is demonstrated not only by the journey of the protagonist up and down and up again but also by the shaming of the enemy, an element which is dramatically emphasized in the final phases of the plot."[5]

---

[4] Moore, Carey A., "Prolegomenon" in *Studies in the Book of Esther* (New York: Ktav Publishing, 1982)

[5] Timothy S. Laniak, *Shame and Honor in the Book of Esther: Society of Biblical Literature (*Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998)

Esther's eventual willingness to take a risk and intercede on behalf of her people is the catalyst for change. If the church wants to witness changes in society, there is a need for prophetic risk takers. Without Mordecai's prophetic proclamation it is doubtful that Esther would have taken any actions.

This motif of shame vs. honor could provide the framework to move from the shameful results of greed and consumerism that is common in middle and upper-class citizens to a more humane system of equality that bestows honor, and moreover dignity, to those who currently live in shame. It would require individuals and groups such as congregations to make sacrifices similar those made by Esther and risk it all by speaking truth to power, advocating for and allocating resources to those in need.

It appears that the most commonly quoted scripture from the book of Esther can be found in 4:16 "Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will also fast as you do. After that I will go to the king, though it is against the law; and if I perish, I perish."[6]Esther's attitude expresses the necessity of helping those in need by any means necessary.

Queen Vashti broke the social code in an effort to protect herself, and Esther breaks the social codes and puts herself at risk solely to help others. This provides a model for making a sacrifice on behalf of others to do justice. The familiar words echoed at the end of the verse, "If I perish, I perish," also provide an indication of the risk involved with doing justice. However, one could argue there is a greater risk and higher

[6] Est. 4:16

cost for not seeking justice. If one chooses to ignore the cries of the widows, orphans and others in need the livelihood and lives of many are at stake. The recent economic turmoil bears witness that when one is at risk the entire world we live in is at risk. It is a domino effect.

Even in today's society people including Christians and faith communities at large tend to evaluate the personal cost for doing justice, and if the cost appears to be enormous, often nothing is done. The cost is often calculated based on how far one will be moved from their comfort zone. If it is not in the church's budget or if inviting "others" in will cause any type of discomfort, outreach programs are often cancelled or never implemented. It is easy to believe that if the ills of society are ignored they will go away. Often if it is a situation that does not directly affect a person, there is little incentive to respond.

Reality, for those in America especially Black America, who consider themselves to be middle-class citizens, the space between the "haves and the have-nots" is decreasing. Mordecai's warning to Esther also found in the fourth chapter provides a social justice hermeneutic, "Do not think that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews."[7] This scripture passage can be seen as a biblical foundation as to why those who currently "have" should advocate and work toward providing for those that currently" have not."

"The king's palace" represents the comfort zone. It is a place that a number of middle and upper class citizens of all ethnic backgrounds reside. The palace provides a

[7] Est. 4:16

pseudo-feeling of safety and protection from a growing list of societal inequities. This list includes illiteracy, unjust incarceration, poor or no access to health care, inadequate housing, predatory lending practices and a growing number of other justice issues that plague the poor of this nation. The reality is that individuals cannot hide in the palace forever and call themselves a "child of GOD," nor should they be comfortable doing so.

It is evident that the walls of the palace are deteriorating. Every other news report provides glaring statistics on the state of the economy, which includes record unemployment and foreclosures that affect society at large. These are not merely issues that affect those that have been labeled as "poor," but also those that previously thought they were secure. If the job of the Gospel is truth-telling, then preachers and pastors have an obligation to tell the truth not just about the ills of society but also the failure of Christians to respond, or in simple terms to be the church.

The book of Esther gives a profound view of two parallel universes. The book reeks of lavish living. It opens describing King Ahasuerus, "The same Ahasuerus that ruled over one hundred and twenty seven provinces from India to Ethiopia."[8] The text goes on to describe every luxurious facet of the surroundings from the wine goblets to the tapestry on the wall. According to Laniak these details, "illustrate the status-marking significance of objects in the court. "He adds, "That gold, silver, purple and white linen are associated with royalty is no coincidence."[9] This is the universe inside the palace. Outside the palace was the suffering and oppression that of those of the Jewish Diaspora.

---

[8] Ibid, Est.: 1:1.

[9] Timothy S. Laniak, *Shame and Honor in the Book of Esther: Society of Biblical Literature (*Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 39.

Esther and Mordecai's presence inside the walls of the palace gave the palace a direct connection to those beyond the walls. The power and position of the King and his court connected those who dwelled outside the palace to the palace. It was an inequitable relationship. The power rested inside the walls of the palace. Many today, especially in the United States, gather objects that could be described as "status-marking" significance. It can be seen in the number of designer purses that are carefully placed on the pews on Sundays as well as in the number of "designer" cars that fill up space on church parking lots.

Depending on the church and the weather, fur coats take up seats that could be shared with others. That is life inside the four walls of sanctuaries, while outside– especially for churches located in urban areas members of the community live at risk, similar to those in exile. Congruent to the lack of concern about the greater community on the part of the residents inside the palace is the attitudes of many Christians inside our churches.

Interestingly enough, a generation ago there was not a notable difference in the material possessions or the lives of Black people in the church or in the community. There have been socioeconomic differences among Black people for decades but resources were more communal. It was hard to separate the Black Church from the Black Community. There at least appeared to be more sharing of resources, especially with those who were known to have had less. These were the days when neighbors showed up to borrow a cup of sugar.

Today there seems to be a move toward a more individualistic approach to life, “I got mine, you get yours.” This is antithetical to the biblical model. It could be said as a twist of fate with Vashti being disposed and Esther being chosen as Queen that Esther had received her reparations. Fortunately, Mordecai’s, conscience, concern and courage did not allow the story to end there. They did not settle for the bounty of exclusive access to the king and the palace but sought to be inclusive. This book and the scripture as previously noted in Esther 4:13 sets the framework for preaching the moral and communal obligation to seek justice on behalf of others despite one’s social location.

Using this scripture as one of the Old Testament foundational texts provides excellent material for preaching the prophetic to parishioners who are socially and economically equipped to work on behalf of others. In essence Mordecai plays the role of prophet in this book. He lifts up the necessity for action and motivates Esther to go beyond herself and become an advocate for those who were marginalized among them. Mordecai was in a unique position, having a location in the palace but also keenly aware of what or more specifically who lies beyond the gate. Pastors today have access because of their position and vocation to interface with various groups inside the “holy palace” and outside.

The work of preaching is not just to keep up with this week’s lectionary scripture. It requires intentional attention to the social, economic and political issues that affect the lives of the people inside the church walls and beyond. The ancient text has more meaning when we can contextualize it and use it as a catalyst for transformation–not just in the lives of our parishioners, but also in the world outside of one’s church.

The opportunity for transformation was alluded to through Mordecai's words that served as a catalyst or motivation for Esther's actions. Mordecai proclaimed the need for action and alerted Esther not only to the threat that existed for her community, but also for her personally. The simple message interpreted as, "do not think you are safe" literally changed and saved the lives of an entire community. It also changed in a negative manner the life of the oppressor, Haman.

Prophetic proclamation has the power to motivate people to action. The Bible pleads its own case toward the requirement of humans to act on behalf of others. Responding to the preached word allows people to make internal changes and also to change systems and to implement programs that offer transformation. When this occurs the church also fulfills its ecclesiological mission to be the hands of Christ at work in the world.

This social justice motif and the necessity of those who have the resources to work on behalf of those who need the resources are not exclusive to the Old Testament. Examination of the New Testament also provides foundational scriptures that can be used as material for preaching and teaching the same motif. The first Epistle of John states, "We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help"?[10] "GOD is love" is a common quote among believers. Often Christians try to define GOD by GOD's attributes or characteristics.

[10] 1Jn. 3:16-17.

If humans are made in the image of GOD as suggested by Bible, then emulating the characteristics of Christ through praxis seems to be necessary. This is the New Testament biblical foundation for the project.

The book of James states in chapter two, "What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill, and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead."[11] Obviously, by the same token saying we love everybody but only work on behalf of ourselves represents a lifeless effort. It does nothing to demonstrate the love of GOD.

The world and the people of the world, not just the global world but also the world in, near, and around communities of faith, in many cases are in crisis. Even crises of faith are often a result of not seeing any evidence of what one has been hoping for has come to pass. One could imagine it could be difficult to have faith in a GOD that you cannot see when all you do see is lack and despair. The 1 John text is clear: GOD could send GOD's son Jesus as a sacrifice for humankind because of unconditional love, and in return those who claim to have the love of GOD are not willing to give a sandwich or any other ongoing tangible means of support or relief to others.

Prophetic preaching requires the prophet to have a heart for GOD's people. It is not done as a media stunt or to provide personal promotional opportunities. It should be born out of love for GOD's creation.

---

[11] Jam. 2:4-17.

If "GOD so loved the world that he sent his only begotten son…"[12] The Son, Jesus comes as an act of kindness and "speaks truth to power." Throughout his ministry Jesus exemplified his love for GOD and humankind. If the church represents the "body of Christ," one can conclude the church has a responsibility to demonstrate this love by speaking and acting on behalf of others.

The origin of First John's theologian is uncertain. It is often attributed to the author of the Gospel of John. Upon reading it one does not have to be a theologian or a scholar to note the division that seems to be among the group of believers that are the audience for this text. Robert Kysar in his commentary on the Epistles of John states, "That each represents dissenters that represent threats to the Christian community." He also suggests that there were several issues that divided the community, two of which he described as, "It appears that they do not exercise love in relationship to the other members of the Christian community. Second, they have separated themselves from the community."[13]

Upon doing literary criticism of First John Kysar indicates that the book does not follow a typical Epistle and suggest that "the simplest way of making sense of its literary form is to view it as a kind of anthology of bits of sermons patched together rendered into a written form for circulation."[14] While the aforementioned-scripture may be borne out of an internal dispute, that does not negate its power and its message for a modern day context. "The church" that is the subject of 1 John may have been divided on policies,

---

[12] John 3:16

[13] Robert Kysar, *Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament: I, II, III John* (Minneapolis: Augusburg, 1986), 17.

[14] Ibid., 16.

doctrines and ideologies. This is a reminder, that love for GOD and one another should unite them. There is evidence of this same kind of division today. However, a more glaring divider is classism. This text alludes to the existence of that as well. The text does not seem to need decoding; it is written in prose. It clearly identifies the responsibility of those with possessions towards those without. The fulfillment of this responsibility, according to this biblical author, is a demonstration of the fact that individuals love GOD.

There is an illusion of success that is often perpetuated by the number of things that one has. This is evident in the Esther scripture with all of the fixtures and materials that were present in the palace. Creature comforts can and do cause a separation of people. Social status has caused some churches and parishioners to separate themselves from the reality that occurs outside the walls of the church and outside of the zip codes of people's comfort zones. The researcher does not mean to suggest it is wrong to acquire materials but the Bible seems clear on how to utilize those resources, and they should not be just for the building of one's personal wealth or ego.

The context of the message is irrelevant to what this particular message is saying. It's interesting that Kysar suggests that this collection of scriptures were bits of sermons. The ancient words of the author in 1 John 3:17 continues to provide a solid and prolific message for a prophetic sermon. Similar to the message in Esther 4:13, Mordecai could have very well asked Esther how can you love GOD or have the love of GOD, have resources and see your brothers or sisters in need and refuse to help?

That makes for a great foundation for a sermon on Sunday morning in this new millennium. The question is still relevant despite the context. How can one have a closet

full of shoes, designer purses, more clothes than they have closets, more food than one family can eat, love GOD and still refuse to help others? Many live like this and pass by those that need help on their way to church. It should be problematic to step over the oppressed, the least and the left out on the sidewalk in front of the church and still claim to be a part of the "body of Christ." While many commandments, attributes and characteristics of GOD are debatable who can really argue with the theme of love? If humans are made in GOD's image one could conclude that there should be evidence of the love of GOD in our relationships with each other.

The summary of the Decalogue as recited in the African Methodist Episcopal Church's liturgy recites two commandments, "Hear what Christ our savior says, you should love your Lord your GOD with all heart, soul and mind and the second one is like it, you should love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depends all the law and prophets."[15] The implication is that all of the Ten Commandments can be summarized by these two commandments. These words are recited in A.M.E. Churches all over the globe every Sunday.

Integrating the ideology behind the Ten Commandments with social justice issues allows believers to understand GOD's intent for a unified community throughout the world. It creates a template for demonstrating real love to others in the community and the world.

It allows the laws from an ancient text to be applied in realistic ways. If humankind can demonstrate love for GOD given neighbors in the same excessive manner in which many

[15] Liturgy of the A.M.E. Church Nashville, TN: A.M.E. Sunday School 2009 (reprint)

self-aggrandizing people look out for themselves there would be fewer disparities in society. Instead of "supersizing" everything for personal gain resources would be divided and shared. If one family on the block had food all of the families would have food.

This allows for a transition from the theory of ministry to the praxis of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That praxis could be carried out in outreach programs and in organized advocacy efforts. Preaching allows people to see the Bible in action. It has been said that, "Prophetic preaching comforts the afflicted and afflicts the comforted."[16]There are those inside and outside the church that need to be afflicted and many more that need to be comforted. Love is an intangible resource that can and should be shared in tangible ways. Again, it is important to state that having resources or even wealth is not the issue, but hoarding wealth and ignoring those that live in constant lack is problematic.

Regarding the text in First John, R. Alan Culpepper reflects on the position of the author and states, "He does not condemn having the means of life but warns the faithful against the pride, arrogance and misplaced confidence which so often accompany possessing material goods." He further illustrates that believers can have resources as he points out, "At least some of the faithful had "worldly goods." [17]

It is crucial that preachers do not use social justice preaching as an opportunity to condemn those with resources. Shaming people into assisting is unethical. It is also futile on a long-term basis. It does not allow transformation to occur in the giver or the receiver. This type of message further perpetuates division. It also implies that having assets is wrong. The preached word should prick the heart.

---

[16] Author unknown

[17] R. Alan Culpepper, *I John 2 John 3 John (Knox Preaching Guides)* (Atlanta: J. Knox Press, 1985)

Sermons should provide motivation and demonstrate how people can express the love of GOD. This text suggests a tangible demonstration is to exhibit love to each other by providing assistance when it is needed. Today's task of lifting up what it means to "love your neighbor" is more daunting.

The average American is comfortable participating in a society that depends less on other members of the community. Architectural design has changed. Expansive front porches are rare in newer homes. It is more common to have an extensive deck on the back of the house. Privacy fences are another common feature of today's homes.

Garages used to primarily be detached structures in the back of the house. Attached garages, in some cases have become a barrier to engaging with neighbors. Cars are driven directly into the garage and once the door is let down the residents rarely interact with anyone outside.

The world has changed, but the social problems of our neighborhoods have not only remained but have also multiplied. Churches often change geographic locations as the demographics of the congregation change. This shift could leave one to conclude the church is only called to do ministry in a particular segment of town to a particular segment of people. The Bible is clear from Israel to post Resurrection that Christianity is not built on the country club model of individual rewards and benefits but on the discipleship model of sharing not just the "Good News" but resources. If the church is still trying to figure out what GOD requires of us, the prophet Micah answers it best,

"He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."[18]

Theological Foundation

The church has always had a multitude of functions. It is the cultural center of many communities. The church historically served as multipurpose buildings. They were obviously places of worship but also the place that Boys and Girls Scouts met. The Civil Rights activist of the 1950's and 1960's found refuge and meeting space in the church. It served as a frequent fellowship hall.

Churches have been the site of annual chicken and barbeque dinners, a place of celebration, baby showers and wedding receptions were held at church. It is also the place that people come to seek guidance and to receive instruction. The early church as depicted in the book of Acts was also a place that people came to have their spiritual and temporal needs met.

> [32]Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common.[33]With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.[34]There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold.[35]They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.[36]There was a Levite, a native of Cyprus, Joseph, to whom the apostles gave the name Barnabas (which means "son of encouragement").[37]He sold a field that belonged to him, then brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.[19]

---

[18] Micah 6:8

[19] Acts 4:32-37

It is debatable if this model ever actually worked. It is obvious from the introduction of Annais and Sapphira [20]in the very next chapter that there is the tendency among humans to be dishonest and that greed can be a factor in how much humans are willing to share with each other. However, this pericope illustrates the ethos of the sharing of resources that was a part of the culture of the early church. The early church is depicted as a distribution center for the community.

One of the overarching motifs of the Bible is the necessity of humankind to look after and take care of each other, specifically those who lack resources to take care of themselves. Theology in simple terms means the study of GOD. If one studies GOD, the attributes and characteristics of the Supreme Being, it becomes evident that GOD is concerned for all creation and intends human kind to act accordingly. One specific theology that is built on this foundation is Liberation Theology. Liberation Theology originated in Latin America. The theological framework for social justice and outreach ministry derive from a combination of a social form of Ecclesiology and Liberation Theology.

Ecclesiology, in very simple terms can be defined as the work of Christ in the world. Ecclesiology answers the question what does it mean to be the church. The word ecclesiology is derived from *ekklesia,* a Greek word that translates into church. Yet ecclesiology is not just about a building or the universal concept of church as an institution. It is the demonstrative acts of faith.

[20] Acts 5:1-11

Emil Brunner suggests that the activities of the early church were an expression of that faith, stating, "The means of that the social character of the ekklesia resulted from its spiritual character as an association of men through the Holy Spirit through the love of Christ and that itself was the structural law of this social entity. There was no other law, nor was there need for any. The ekklesia was a spiritual brotherhood, from law."[21] This form of social or communal ecclesiology allows the church to exemplify the scripture as found in the Book of James, "For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is also dead."[22]The early church seemed to focus on unity, and according to the Acts text encouraged those who owned land and other resources to share with those who did not.

The result can be found in the second chapter of Acts. "Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need."[23] The Disciples, being the "preachers and ministry staff" of the church, seemingly interpreted the teachings and sermons of Christ as a mandate to take care of those in need.

It would stand to reason that Jesus' sermons about the treatment of the marginalized and social justice could be seen as the catalyst for creating this system. Jesus the man spent most of his time in proclamation. The miracles and other activities associated with Jesus usually occurred after he had proclaimed and taught. The word

---

[21] Emil Brunner, *Dogmatics, vol. 3, The Christian Doctrine of the Church, Faith and Consummation*, trans. David Cairns (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 22.

[22] James 2:26

[23] Acts 2:43-45

appeared to act as a motivating factor in activating the faith of those in need of a miracle. The "Jesus Movement" was shaped by the teachings and preaching of Jesus Christ. Those who witnessed the word through Jesus Christ sought to emulate those activities as well as to demonstrate how to live out the instructions.

Christianity is a communal religion: one's individual actions have an effect on the whole of the community. The ministry of Christ is understood not merely as a message for individuals but for the body of Christ at large. The model that is exemplified in the Book of Acts is meaningful because it eliminates the separation of those that "have from those that have not."

While Greco-Roman society of the first century did not operate on the same social codes and norms as today's postmodern society, there is something to be learned from the practices of the early church as it pertained to the needs of the community. Outreach and social justice ministry can be seen as an ecclesiological understanding of the mission of the church. Despite the differences between the world in the new millennium and the world of the antiquity, one common denominator is the need for assistance by members of the community.

While recognizing the Church cannot be all things to all people, just as Christ and the teachings of Christ informed the early church, the Biblical account of those teachings should inform the Church of today. The popular modern acronym "WWJD" (What would Jesus do?) seems to be an attempt to demonstrate the activities of Jesus. While no one can actually claim to know exactly what Jesus would do in any given situation.

One can conclude from the biblical portrait of Jesus that he would not allow children to die in the street as a result of gun violence and ignore it. Jesus would not allow some people to eat themselves to death and others to die of starvation and still refuse to attempt to make the distribution of food equal. Jesus would not allow the discrimination and persecution of people, based on their skin color, sexual habits, age, or sex and remain silent.

The basic tenet of Liberation Theology suggests that GOD advocates for and identifies with those that are oppressed and marginalized. James Cone is credited with introducing Black Liberation Theology. Cone states, "Being a servant of Jesus involves more than meeting every Sunday for worship and other liturgical gatherings. It involves more than serving as an officer or even a pastor of a church. Servant includes a political component that thrusts a local congregation into society, where it must take sides with the poor."[24] Liberation is not a state of mind or merely a theological byproduct of the Civil Rights era. It is an action-oriented approach not just to understanding Christ but carrying out the work of Christ.

Liberation theology is Christocentric. If the foundation of the Christian religion is Christ then it is easy to understand this longing to interpret and emulate the actions of Christ. The most ideal place to see the love of Christ demonstrated and the actions of the historical Jesus duplicated is the Church, the body of Christ. However in many cases this is where the church draws the line. There are numerous churches that have ongoing outreach activities. They operate food pantries, soup kitchens, clothes closets and have

[24] James H. Cone, *Speaking the Truth: Ecumenism, Liberation and Black Theology* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdsmans Publishing Co., 1986), 124.

annual back to school giveaways. These are admirable and often necessary efforts toward helping those that are in need. The majority of these programs are episodic. There is no shortage of churches distributing a few turkeys at Thanksgiving and provide school age children with a few toys at Christmas. What happens on the other days of the year?

If the church learns to identify its self as Christ's hands extended, it will take more of a concentrated and organized effort to provide for the needs of the ever-increasing number of those who are socially and economically marginalized. When a church understands that outreach and social justice ministry have to be a part of long-term planning it will be easier to staff and fund programs.

Only when those ministries become a priority may resources be appropriately allocated. Some of this work begins in the boardrooms and meeting rooms, but also has to be carried out by the highest office in the Church, the pastor. Preaching provides an immediate opportunity for a pastor to address the chasm between what the community needs and what the church does. When a church is able to concentrate on its mission, the priorities of parishioners seem to shift from having church to being church. Social justice and outreach ministries should be as common as having some form of Sunday School or Christian Education.

It should be a crucial function in the "Black Church." The Black Church is that mysterious institution comprised of those communities of faith where the primary race of parishioners is African Americans. Some have denied the existence of it. The Black Church is not an indication of being a part of a particular denomination and can be found in denominations in which the majority of the parishioners are Caucasian.

As previously mentioned, the necessity of the church to respond to the needs of the community is related to ecclesiology and Liberation Theology. Theologian James Evans explores this integration. Evans states, "The central problem in ecclesiology is the tension between what the church claims to be and what it actually is."[25] Just as there are various theologies there are a myriad of ecclesiological perspectives.

According to Evans, the ecclesiology of the Black Church is also rooted in liberation. He states, "Liberation has been central to the African American church's self-understanding since its inception. This liberation, however, is not just an approach steeped in missiology but it is the essence of the church's identity." The church exists for the liberation of the people and not just the ones that are members of the church. He adds, "The African American Church is based on the African notion of 'self in community.' The self has no being apart from the community, and the community is an abstraction apart from the collection of the selves. The liberation of one implies the liberation of the other."[26] If the church is going to be the church, there should be empirical evidence of liberation. The issue is many those whom are marginalized do not have the resources or the access to resources for liberation to begin. They continue to be in need of advocates to work on their behalf as well as for a voice to cry loudly and promulgate their freedom. It stands to reason in a congregation primarily comprised of middle-class citizens has the resources, the access and the voice to do so.

---

[25] James H. Evans Jr., *We Have Been Believers* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1992), 134.

[26] Ibid., 135.

According to Evans one of the symbols of the mission of the church is kerygma or the preached Word. Kerygma is a Greek word defined as the preaching of the Gospel. It is often associated with the early Church. Evans indicates that, "Because Jesus is the ground of human liberation; the church is centered in the project of human liberation." He adds, "This is not a forced or artificial consensus, but a genuine commitment to the one thing for which Jesus suffered, died and rose from the dead. This one thing is the content of the kerygma, the preaching and proclamation of the church."[27]

Sunday morning is the time of greatest attendance at most mainline churches. It is the time that there is a captive audience. Many preachers have used the preaching moment to manipulate people; here is an opportunity to liberate those that are in bonds to the ills of society, by empowering those with resources to act on their behalf. Prophetic preaching provides that opportunity.

The phrase "speaking truth to power" is very common among social justice activists. A true prophet has to be willing to speak truth. Prophetic preaching challenges and convicts, it rarely comforts. A prophetic preacher is on a specific mission for a specific time and that is evidenced in the messages they preach. Prophetic preaching calls out evil and attempts to call into being a new or reimagined way of being. Prophetic preaching can be political but doesn't have to be and being political doesn't equate to being prophetic. The researcher describes prophetic preaching as proclamation that is commissioned by GOD as a response to the people of GOD.

[27] Ibid., 136.

When Moses was called it was because GOD responded to the cry of the people. "GOD said I have seen the affliction of my people and have heard their cry…."[28] Prophetic preaching is risky business. GOD raises a prophetic voice in response to human conditions that seem to involve injustices and oppression. GOD sends a prophet to speak truth to institutions and systems of power. The often, reluctant prophet answers and hears from GOD prior to responding to the oppression.

People are crying; in fact, they are screaming. The recent nationwide movement known as "Occupy Wall Street" is a glaring example of the cries of the people. While the occupants of Wall Street seek to maintain their lifestyles there are some people, such as the homeless and the growing number of the families that have lost their home in foreclosure, who really just want to occupy any home on any street in America. While there were celebrities and politicians that weighed in on the "Occupy" movement there was very little "noise" made from the pulpits of America. In the words of Marvin McMickle, "*Where Have All the Prophets Gone?*"[29]

Seemingly, some preachers and modern day prophets have become too comfortable in their celebrity lifestyles. If the shepherd is mesmerized by the bling-bling that is associated with being a successful pastor, it stands to reason that those that fill the pews and have acquired their own level of success may not have the ability to see beyond their own designer frame glasses. Silent preachers equate to silent pews.

---

[28] Ex. 3:7

[29] Marvin McMickle, *Where Have All the Prophets Gone: Reclaiming Prophetic Preaching in America* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2006)

The only noise being made is from the real pain and suffering that occurs from those in the margins of our society. However, the walls in the church have become so thick and so insulated that the cries may go unheard because pastors and parishioners have literally and figuratively moved too far away to hear, see or notice the cries. It is not unethical to acquire assets. However if the acquisition of materials interferes with one's desire to assist others, the assets have created a barrier. It is problematic when the assets become a dividing wall.

Over the last decade the world has witnessed huge companies from banks to beer makers being acquired by foreign entities and others being dissolved. The government at each level, local, state and federal has experienced layoffs. The safety net is evaporating. Many of the palaces of suburban America lie in ruins because middle class families have lost their piece of the American dream.

Mordecai in the book of Esther may not have been considered a prophet, but he most certainly made a prophetic promulgation. Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, "Do not think that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews."[30] Esther was then motivated to act on behalf of others. She immediately started to strategize and developed a game plan. She knew that despite her lavish surroundings if her people were at risk, she was too. Her heart at least appeared to be pricked by the words of Mordecai. It is possible that there are some people of all social and economic levels waiting for a call to action. Shepherds lead and sheep follow.

[30] Est. 4:13

One of the difficult but necessary tasks of a prophetic shepherd is to lead the congregation in imagining a new way of being This is not to be confused with shaming people into action but one must facilitate transformation. The result of shaming is often the episodic annual programs. Once the feeling of shame is eradicated so are the programs that occur as a result of the shame. These kinds of activities are not prone to transformation. A prophetic leader teaches in addition to proclaiming.

A pastor has an obligation to preach and teach for transformation. If the only focus is those things that will make the parishioners feel good there is little opportunity for transformation. This leads to stagnation and a false sense of self. If people were perfect and did not need a challenge, they would not come to church. It is the job of the prophet to lead the charge and to be catalyst for transformative activities.

McMickle says that the problem of preachers not preaching in a prophetic manner that challenges or calls people to action is bigger that the pulpit. He states, "The crisis is not simply in the pulpits of local churches across the country; the situation is equally dire so far as pastor's conferences, denominational conventions and preaching journals and magazines are concerned. The burning concerns of prophetic preaching are almost entirely absent. There is a deafening silence on such matters as society's care for "the least of these…"[31]

He describes the issue "as a constant call to praise GOD, without tangible ways of serving GOD by helping others."[32] It illustrates the differences in priest versus prophet.

---

[31] Marvin McMickle, *Where Have All the Prophets Gone: Reclaiming Prophetic Preaching in America* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2006), 79.

[32]Ibid.

Those called to pastoral ministry in particular have the responsibility of integrating the two roles as clearly both are necessary. If the mission of the church is clear from pulpit to the pews there will be an internal culture that cultivates the desire to reach externally as the hands and feet of Christ.

Historical Foundation

Poverty is an issue that humans have wrestled with since biblical times. Jesus' response to the disciples as they protested the idea of the woman anointing his feet with expensive oil, "You will always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me,"[33] Is an indication of the severity and the longevity of the problem. While poverty is not the root of all social ills, oppression that results in poverty is the root cause of many problems facing those that would be considered, "the least of these." A glaring and related issue in America is racism. The oppressive acts of the dominant society that stem from racism still often result in poverty. The old adage of being "the last one hired and the first one fired," often puts people of color at risk to live in poverty at any given time. Historically the church has played a role in offering relief to the poor.

A simple non-metaphoric definition of the poor is given by Clodovis Boff and George V. Pixley, "They are those who suffer from basic economic need, those who are deprived of material goods necessary to live with dignity."[34]Boff and Pixley describe the option of the poor as being "something that concerns GOD." They add, "GOD is the first to opt for the poor, and it is only as a consequence of this that the church has to opt for

---

[33] Mat. 26:11

[34] Clodovis Boff and George V. Pixley, *The Bible, The Church and the Poor* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1989)

the poor."[35] The preacher is not only the mouthpiece of GOD but also the one that speaks on behalf of the community of believers to those beyond the walls of the organized church. If GOD and the church are opting for the poor, the preacher is next in line.

The prophetic preacher is called to illuminate opportunities for parishioners to be in community with the rest of the world. The church has traditionally had a role in offsetting the social and economic disparities of the community. Hospitals and schools were initially established in America by churches. As churches began to be established in the colonies the division that was evident due to racism and slavery created the necessity for worship spaces that were solely for the use of those of African descent. The African Methodist Episcopal denomination was born out of this need. Across America free Africans as well as enslaved Africans slowly started to build their own houses of worship. Some would follow the lead of Richard Allen and develop denominations and others would seek just to have a separate location that was free from the constant oversight of the slave master.

This religious revolution resulted in the creation of the "Black Church." The Black Church is an institution within an institution. The Black Church refers to a tradition that is often represented by its style of worship and preaching. It is ontologically comprised of a community of believers that exist to worship and praise GOD in a unique manner that reflects their African heritage and their emotive nature. The Black Church has historically been a social and a religious institution. Since inception the Black Church has responded to the needs of the poor as many of those that were affected by poverty and racism sat in the pews.

---

[35] Ibid., 109.

A general ecclesiology of the Black Church can be summed up by these words from Dietrich Bonhoeffer whose theology was greatly influenced by his experience at a historic Black Church, Abyssinia Baptist Church in New York, "The church is the church only when it exists for others." He elaborated, "The church must share in the secular problems of ordinary human life, not dominating, but helping and serving."[36] The Black Church was a place that existed for the community. It was visible in tangible ways including providing clothes, shoes and especially meals to those in need.

Just as the Black Church can be identified by its unique fervent worship style at the Black Preaching has unparalleled characteristics that reflect the Black Church worship experience. Preaching in the Black Church tradition has become an anomaly of sorts. It is often imitated, analyzed, misunderstood and has a unique style and substance that is coveted by the majority.

Cleophus LaRue indicates "Black preaching is regarded as the most vibrant, imaginative and communicatively effective preaching on the scene today." He goes on to juxtapose it with the nature of preaching by white counterparts and refers to a number of white theologians that have lifted Black preaching as iconic. His list includes Richard Lischer and Stephen Farris. [37]

Preaching can be simply seen as the opportunity for the people of GOD to hear from the one that is chosen or sent to speak on GOD's behalf. Preaching is an oral form of art. It is more than oration, when done appropriately it is words that have been inspired

---

[36] Wayne Whitson Floyd, *The Wisdom and Witness of Bonhoeffer* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2000), 18-20.

[37] Cleophus J. LaRue, *I Believe I'll Testify* (Louisville: Westminster Knox, 2011)

by the Holy Spirit. It would be fair to say that all preaching should be done with authority as the call comes from above and is confirmed below. However, it seems that a preacher in the Black Church tradition has historically had a status that was unparalleled in the community.

LaRue indicates, "The preacher does not preach because it is their turn, but rather it is their time, a time that has been ordered by GOD." He adds, "The one who stands before the congregation has been called by GOD and selected by the congregation to perform this task every Sunday." LaRue maintains that preachers in the Black Church are held in high regard.[38]

There are stories told of how the preacher or pastor's presence at Sunday dinner was comparable to being visited by royalty. Special meals were prepared and often times no one could eat until the pastor was fed. Since the founding of this country the impact of preaching on those in America has been profound. The social position of the preacher was significant because the church played a significant role in the lives of the parishioners. Just as the temple became the cultural center for the Israelites in the in Jerusalem communities were built around churches. The power of the church in the biblical narrative can be observed by reading the words of the Psalmist in Psalms 122, "I was glad when they said to me let us go to the house of the Lord!" [39] It seemed that this enthusiasm was carried over into the New Testament church and appeared in America, a country that was populated by Europeans seeking a new life and by Africans forced into a new life.

---

[38] Ibid., 64.

[39] Psalm 122:1

The church was established and neighborhoods were established around churches. The church was a one of the anchors of the community. Christian churches are extremely diverse. There are a myriad of theological beliefs and doctrines but primarily the one thing that they have in common is the role of the shepherd.

The pastor, preacher or priest is an authority figure in churches across denominational lines. Even in churches with a Congregationalist tradition people expect leadership from the pulpit. When the preacher stands to speak on the Sabbath it is normally to a group of listeners that come with high expectation of receiving a message. If preachers are called to speak on behalf of GOD the message should reflect the messages of GOD as redacted in the biblical account.

One could assume that if one is transparent and effective they will preach through and from their own experiences and allow the text, the preacher, the divine and the lives of the people to be blended in a way that reaches the listeners. The combination of each of these facets is powerful in the lived experiences of Black people in America. Slavery and the oppression caused by it that continues to run rampant in America is part of the ontology of the passion and profundity that marks Black preaching.

The Black preacher had to always be tuned in into the social burdens that affected their context. The sermon was expected to be a message of relief from the pain of an oppressed existence. The preacher spoke truth not just to systems but also to the hearts of the people that were gathered burdened by the physical, emotional and spiritual pain of their existence. The sermon provided a balm and in many ways allowed the parishioners to escape to a place that the pain would be eased, that transformation would occur.

Admittedly for some it was an eschatological message. The message provided the hope of going to Heaven and for others it was the possibility of escaping to freedom.

According to the iconic homiletics professor, preacher and theologian, Dr. Henry Mitchell, "The key to understanding different kinds of preaching is culture." Mitchell defines culture as, "the accumulation over time of all the wisdom and methods of a given cultural group for the purpose of ensuring its survival." He adds, "Preaching is carried out in the idiom, imagery, styles and world view of a particular people."[40] Very few would argue that those that are Black in America are a part of a culture that is marred in pain and suffering.

The Black preacher embodies the pain of the people but manages to lift up the hope of salvation through a risen Savior. This is the thread that has woven the will to survive throughout the history of those of African descent in America. Ironically, the first documented Black preachers in the United States preached primarily to white audiences. Mitchell notes that the man he and others refer to as "the best known traveling Black preacher, Rev. Harry Hoosier "aka Black Harry" often preached to large numbers of Whites. He also notes that the founder of the A.M.E. Church, Richard Allen, is recorded as having traveled for two years preaching to whites."[41]

It could be said that this unique style of preaching then and now had an effect on people that was indelible and unmatched. Black preachers preach through a personal lived reality that is as authentic as their skin color. The call and response nature of Black

---

[40] Henry L. Mitchell, *Black Preaching: The Recovery of a Powerful Art* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990)

[41] Ibid., 25-26.

preaching seems as innate as answering a phone when it rings. This dialectic communication is part of the tradition that is passed on from African religious practices. Mitchell traces the evolution of the Black preacher forward to the inception of the Black Church.

If Black preachers initially preached to whites, it is obvious that the phenomena known as the Black Church came later. He suggests, "The Black Church was an attempt, born of cultural and religious nostalgia, to reestablish on American soil the worship practices and extended family society of the African Traditional Religion." According to Mitchell one of the American influences on Black preaching was the revivalist of the Great Awakening, George Whitfield.[42]Whitfield is an icon in Early American preaching and had the opportunity influence Black and White preachers and congregations throughout the colonies. His colorful language and use of imagery was reminiscent of the storytelling tradition of Africa that is woven in the fabric of Black Preaching.

The Black Church became an integral part of the survival of Blacks during and beyond slavery. The communal aspect of the extended family and the family aspect of the Black Church have served as a bridge between the Black Church and the community. The community was a part of the church and the church was a part of the community. It was at one time difficult to separate them.

As time went on the role of the Black Church and the Black Preacher continued to prominent in the lives of Black Christian families throughout the country. The Black preacher has historically been charged with preaching prophetically. Prior to Liberation

[42] Ibid., 32.

Theology being a formal school of thought it was the task of the Black Preacher to help the listeners understand that GOD was on their side. This allowed people to seek liberation and understand it was attainable. There was a scarce amount of separation between secular and sacred. The liberator of the prophetic word was present in all areas of life. The church was utilized in multifaceted ways. It represented the center of social, civic and religious activities.

Preaching has the ability to shape, change and transform lives and situations. This is not just a Black Church tradition but is also evident in the scripture as the prophets stood as those with authority indicating that GOD had not forgotten Israel. The Black preacher has historically had the task of providing comfort for those that struggled daily. It was also their job to remind those that were afflicted that GOD was still on their side and had not forgotten about them. This is similar to the tasks of the prophets in the Old Testament.

The Twentieth Century and particularly the Civil Rights Movement brought a lot of progress to Blacks at large. The church was in the forefront of the tumultuous activities of the 1950's and 1960's. The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. may have been known as a political and civil figure but most of all he was a preacher, a prophet who tended to the needs of people beyond the walls of his church. The work of the Civil Rights Movement shows not only the need for justice, but also the power of the people of GOD and a prophetic voice to work to make a change in society at large.

Preaching represents power. The messages that go forth from the pulpit have the ability to transform people in positive but also in irresponsible ways. Communities have

depended on "the message" and the messenger to lead them and guide them not just in religious and spiritual matters but in social matters as well. This leading role requires a level of mature sensibility and responsibility. There are risks and benefits to being held in high regard. One must be careful to be on guard from self-aggrandizing attitudes or messages. The results of that can be seen in the Prosperity Gospel movement where the focus has moved from being a prophetic messenger of GOD to those in the pews to being a profitable promoter of the personality of the preacher.

This movement is not new. The advent of technology has allowed it to be more visible. Before there was the televising of today's peddlers of Prosperity Gospel there were the early Twentieth Century ministries of Sweet Daddy Grace and Father Divine. "Sweet Daddy Grace" the founder of the "House of Prayer" represented a lavish and successful life style. He was seemingly one of the first recorded Prosperity preachers of the Twentieth Century.

The followers according to author Stephanie Mitchem "had pride of partial ownership in the "Houses of Prayer, despite the fact that they may not have owned their own homes."[43] People are hungry for something that they can latch on to and they have become spiritually bloated on the unbalanced diet of those that act, like hedonists and only seek to serve themselves.

The issue is not merely what they choose to serve but the fact that well-rounded spiritual meals that represents moral and Christian ethics, sound theological training and the biblical ecclesiology of advocating for the "least of these" are no longer being served.

---

[43] Stephanie Mitchem, *Name It and Claim It: Prosperity Preaching in the Black Church* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2007)

Even the gross and inhumane misuse of power that has been witnessed in the growing number of cases of Catholic priest as well as other clergy persons involved in pedophilia demonstrates the power of those called to preach. It is a voice that normally has a captive and receptive audience. However it often seems the only voices being heard are the ones that do harm.

The Internet and other forms of technology have been effective in the promotion of many "false prophets." The spread of Prosperity Gospel and the religious sound bites that the world has been exposed to makes it more crucial than ever for real prophetic voices to be heard. The social and economic climate of today has deposited a void in the lives of many. There appears to be a sense of longing. If the world appears to be hopeless it is human to seek a tangible source of hope. It is vital for the church to get back to the business of "being the body of Christ."

This GOD given opportunity to effectively shape the lives of those in the community should not be abused but it should also not be negated. The Prosperity Gospel movement has weakened the prophetic voice of the church. The voices of those that perpetuate false hope are often louder than the prophetic voices. There are negative connotations associated with Prosperity Gospel and some have decided to "throw the baby out with the bathwater." These voices are for some the "voice of the church." Some the feel a true prophetic calling have become quiet to avoid any attention or scrutiny as well to avoid being associated with the negative voices.

The prophetic voice has been one that could be heard in the midst of silence. Over the trajectory of time it has become more difficult to identify.

However, the researcher maintains that one of the responsibilities of the preacher in his or her prophetic role is to call attention to the voids and chasms that exist in the world. It is not just in the pews but also beyond the walls of the sanctuary. This is best executed by proclamation of the preached word which allows people to reimagine what it means to exist.

The reimagining that is done through the sermon would be what Walter Brueggeman refers to as the task of prophetic ministry. Historically, prophetic preaching has been thought of as preaching that yells at or about social ills. Preaching that contains a message for the oppressor is often characterized as prophetic. The task of prophetic preaching is not unilateral. It is a multifaceted responsibility.

Brueggeman suggests the preacher was counted on to help the people create an alternative consciousness, one that brought hope in hopeless and seemingly helpless situations. He states, "The task of prophetic ministry is to nurture, nourish and evoke a consciousness and perception alternative to the consciousness and perception of the dominant culture around us."[44]

This is the history of the Black preacher in the Black church responding to the needs not just of Black people but to people in general. Moreover, this is the history of the people of GOD advocating for the least of these. The African Methodist Episcopal Church has an ethos of helping where there is need. The oldest African American college in the United States is Wilberforce it was started for us and by us. Throughout the history of Christianity in America Christians have responded to the needs of those in the

[44] Walter Brueggeman, *The Prophetic Imagination* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001)

community, this is evident by the number of schools, hospitals and charitable organizations that have been founded by Christian churches. The writer believes that through the logos, the word, there is power. This is transformative power that occurs when proclamation and application are integrated. It allows the preached word to effectively demonstrate an alternative to the suffering that goes on in the streets of our communities. That power that is realized through prophetic preaching can and has been tool for initiating outreach ministry to work on behalf of those beyond the walls.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

The researcher developed this model to prove that prophetic preaching could act as a catalyst to motivate a congregation to implement outreach ministry. The problem, as diagnosed by the researcher, was that the church lacked any ongoing outreach ministry. The researcher defined outreach ministry as ministry activities that are designed to assist those in need by assessing what the needs are, why the need exist and works toward not just fulfilling the need but eliminating the cause of the need. The researcher's ultimate goal was to motivate the congregation to engage in transformative ministry that changes the situations of those in need.

The researcher understood that initially this type of ministry begins with efforts that are often described as mercy ministry, such as food banks. This type of ministry provides immediate relief but does not usually work toward transforming the lives or situations of the people they serve. The ultimate goal of the researcher is to lead the congregation toward establish social justice ministries. Social justice ministries assist with needs but also address the origin of the need and seek to eliminate the obstacles that create the needs. Social justice ministry provides a more outcome based approach with transformation as the goal.

The congregation was informed months in advance that various ministry perspectives of Quinn Chapel were the foundation for the researcher's project. The researcher also indicated in several church conferences that she would be asking the congregation to assist with the project and asked for prayers and cooperation.

The project consisted of three phases: pretest, the application of the project primarily, through sermons and the post-test. Each sermon was expounded on in a Bible study. Each week following the sermon the researcher also taught a fifty minute Bible Study using the text from the preceding Sunday.

A pre-test was constructed. The purpose of the pre-test was to test the attitudes of parishioners about what the church and its ministry as it pertained to the community. The pre-test was given during a church conference. It also became a tool to collect additional demographic information as it pertained to those completing the questionnaire.

Ten weeks later and approximately one month after the last sermon in the series was preached post-test was given. The post-test had the same questions as the pre-test with one additional question added. The question asked if their answer regarding "If the church was doing enough in the community?" had changed. The researcher crafted and preached four sermons and taught three Bible Studies that were based on the social justice based theme, "Beyond the Walls." It is the researcher's belief that the church has a responsibility to the community and that in order for the church to live out its ecclesiological responsibility, as the "body of Christ" has to reach beyond the walls of the sanctuary. The researcher chose biblical texts that illustrated the mandate of the Bible to

act on behalf of those that are marginalized in society. The sermons were based on the following text Esther 4:1-16, Matthew 25:35-45, 1Cor 13 and Luke 10:25-37. In addition, a focus group was chosen. The Focus group consisted of women that are in the Women's Missionary Society. This group was the existing group whose primary function is to assist with and develop outreach programs. There has been an increase of activities initiated by this group. The researchers thought using this group would be an effective way to capture what the motivating factors were behind the increased activity. The members of this group also attend worship weekly and participate in over 95% of all activities of the church including new outreach activities.

Sermon Preparation

Each of the passages was chosen because of the message of advocating for social justice or reaching out to others beyond the walls of the church that the researcher saw in the texts. The researcher preached the sermons over a four-month period. Each thesis dealt with the ideal situation of utilizing tangible and intangible resources to help others in need and or speaking out against social justice issues. The antithesis dealt with the reluctance to do the above or with the social barriers that prevent people from seeing the plight of others. Each sermon pointed to ways to break the barriers that separate the church from the greater society and to break the silence and move toward interceding on behalf of those in need.

The following texts were used for sermons Esther 4:1-16 *You Might Be Next*. The foundational scripture for this sermon was Esther 4:13 when Mordecai reminded Esther that she was not safe just because she lived "inside the walls" of the palace. This sermon was used to illustrate that a Middle Class lifestyle does not provide protection from social ills.

The second sermon preached was from Mark 2:1-12 *Don't Count Me Out Lift Me Up*! This sermon sought to motivate the listeners to see the possibilities in those that may have been living with various social and economic afflictions. It also was intended to help people see that the church is often exclusionary. The church tends to leave people out, if they are "beyond their walls. We pass by the afflicted on our way to see the healer and do not take the time to engage with them to see what their needs are.

The third sermon preached in the series was "Un-break GOD's Heart. It was based on chapter thirteen of First Corinthians.[1] This sermon illustrated all of the ways that we break GOD's heart as we make noise about how GOD is love and we love our neighbors but do not intercede on their behalf. A fourth sermon was preached from the popular text about the "good Samaritan," Luke 10:25-37 *Neighborhood Watch: Looking for the Church.* This sermon illustrated how the neighborhood used to feel safe because the church was present but the church has abandoned the neighborhood. Everyone shows up to help with the exception of the church. These sermons were illustrations of the biblical mandate but also the researcher thought the sermons would be thought provoking as they shed light on various social ills that can be offset by the church. The problem as noted by the researcher was a lack of response in the congregation to the

[1] 1 Cor 13:1-13.

cries of the community. The sermons were the prescription that would allow the congregation to remove the barriers that kept them from hearing the community and the blinders that blocked their view of the problems in the community. The results as note are the changes that have started to occur.

CHAPTER FIVE

FIELD EXPERIENCE

This chapter allows the reader to understand methods of research used to measure the effects of the model. The researcher began by creating a time line for implementation of each of the phases of the project. The timeline included an outline of texts that would be used for sermons and Bible Studies and the dates on which they would be preached and taught. She then studied various modes of researching and gathered information about constructing surveys.

A great deal of time and consideration was given to the kind of questions that would be most effective and the congregation would be responsive to. The researcher was aware that many of the parishioners were private and tended not to want to reveal personal information. The researcher followed the advice that was presented in *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook,* that "informed consent and permission of all parties involved should be obtained by the primary researcher."[1] The researcher was careful to explain the purpose of gathering the information and how the information would be utilized. The researcher chose questionnaires as the vehicle by which information would

[1] Nancy Ammerman, Jackson Carroll, Carl Dudley and William McKinney, *Studying Congregations A New Handbook* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1998)

be collected. The questions were constructed based on the information the researcher wanted to capture. Included in the questions were basic demographic questions. However, in an effort to respect the privacy of parishioners and to avoid making participants uncomfortable questions about income levels were eliminated. The total time period set aside for the project was about four months from the date of the pretest to the date of the post-test.

The researcher sought to collect data about attitudes toward the church and its participation in the greater community. The researcher used basically the same questions to track if there were any posttest changes. The researcher chose to administer the test during two pre-established church conferences. The average attendance at church conferences is about twenty-eight parishioners. There were thirty-one attendees at the church conference that the pretest was distributed. Twenty-seven of the attendees completed the surveys. There were only twenty-four attendees at the second conference and twenty-three completed the survey. The results and analysis are as follows:

Male Respondents: Pretest 6 and Post Test 4

Female Respondents: Pretest 21 and Post Test 19. The research shows 22% of the population that completed the pretest was male and 78% of the respondents were female. Of those taking the post-test 17% were male and 83% were female. Respondents Ages 18-35: Pretest 2 (7%) Post Test 2 (9%)

Respondents Ages 36-50: Pretest 13 (48%) Post Test 11 (48%)

Respondents Ages 51-65: Pretest 7 (26%) Post Test 5 (21.5%)

Respondents Over age 65: Pretest 5 (19%) Post Test 5 (21.5%)

The following are the results and the percentages in the various marital status categories of those taking the both test.

Married Respondents: Pretest 15 (56% of all respondents) and Post Test 13 (57%)

Single Respondents: Pretest 4 (15% of respondents) and Post Test 4 (17%)

Widowed Respondents: Pretest 3 (11% of respondents) and Post Test 2 (9%)

Divorced Respondents: Pretest 3 (11% of respondents) and Post Test 3 (13%)

No Answer Pretest 2 (7%) Post Test 1 (4%)

The Educational Status of the Respondents is as follows:

Respondents with High School Diploma Pretest: 2 (7%) Post Test 2 (9%)

Respondents with Associates Degree: Pretest 1 (4%) Post Test 1 (4%)

Respondents with Undergraduate Degree: Pretest 15 (56%) Post Test 13 (57%)

Respondents with Graduate/Post Graduate Degrees: Pretest 9 (33%) Post Test 7 (30%)

1. Are you currently involved in any ministries at Quinn

Pretest Yes 18 No 9
Post Test Yes 15 No 8

The research indicates 67% of those that participated in the pretest were at that time involved in at least one of the ministries of the church and 33% of the respondents were not. At the time of the post-test 65% of the respondents were involved in a ministry at Quinn and 35 percent were not.

Based on the fact that there were fewer people that completed the post-test it is difficult to prove statistically that there was an increase in ministry participation.

1. Does Quinn need more ministries?

Pretest Yes 7 No 17 No answer 3
Post Test 17 No 4 No answer 3

If so what kind?

Pretest Answers

Youth 3

Seniors 1

Post Test Answers

Singles Ministry 1

Marriage Ministry 2

Prison Ministry 3

Youth 1

After school Tutoring 1

Job Readiness 2

The research indicates even with fewer people responding to then post-test that there was a significant difference in the number of people that indicated additional ministries were needed. At the time of the pretest only 25% of the respondents indicated more ministries were needed and only 4% indicated the kinds of ministries that were needed. By contrast 63% of the respondents did not indicate a need for any new ministries. The post-test results indicated 74% of the respondents saw a need for additional ministries and 43% of them responded as to the kinds of ministries. There were 10 answers given for the kinds of ministry and with the exception of two all were based on outreach type ministries. At the time of the post-test only 17% of the respondents thought no additional ministries were needed. This represents a 46% increase.

1. Is The Church doing a good job in helping the community?

Pretest Yes 15 No 10 No answer 2

Post Test Yes 6 No 11 Better (was not a choice but 5 people wrote it in)

The research indicates that at the time of the pretest 56% of the respondents thought the church was doing a good job of helping in the community and 44% did not agree. The posttest results showed a significant change only 26% thought the church was doing a good job of helping in the community this was 30% decrease from the initial answer and 48% did not.

There was an interesting addition that was written in by 22% of the respondents of the posttest. They created there on category "better" as if to indicate the church was doing a better job than it had been.

Post Test only question: Has your answer to the above question changed?

Yes 15 No 7 No Answer 1

The researcher asked the participants of the posttest to acknowledge if their answer had changed regarding the above question and if so why had it changed. 65% of the respondents indicated there answer to the question had changed, 30% indicated their answer remained the same and 4% did not answer. The 65% that indicated their answers changed would account for the stark contrast in the number of people that answered yes on the pretest and for the additional answer that was written in. If so what has caused you to feel different about how the church is helping the community?

The researcher recorded the list of responses to what caused the respondents to feel different about their answers. The number next to the comment indicates the number of times the same comment appeared.

The following reasons were noted:

“New Pastor “

“Realized we have a lot of work to do.”

“We have let the community down.”

Many people are hurting.”

“We are too blessed not to help others.”

“The church has not done what it needed to do.”

“ I did not realize we could do so much.”

“We have started to get involved again.”

“There has been an increase in outreach.” 3

“We are helping at Salvation Army regularly.” 2

“Realized there was work we were not doing”

There were 14 responses given as to why respondents answered the question different. Of those responses 57% or 8 of them indicated seemingly a new awareness of social needs. 36% of the responses indicated a positive change to the church working in the community by listing the kinds of activities that church has recently engaged in.

2. Are you doing all you can do to help those in need in the community?

Pretest: Yes 20 74% No 7 26%

Post Test: Yes 5 22% No 14 61% No answer 4 17%

The research indicates that similar to what happened with the responses regarding the churches level of participation in the community, when asked about their own participation there was a negative correlation to the number of yes answers on the post test. There was a 52% decrease in those answering to the affirmative and a 35% increase

in those that indicated they were not doing enough. In addition on the posttest 17% of those responding did not answer this was not a factor on the pretest.

The results indicate that there were significant attitudinal changes. There were four more respondents during the pretest. The researcher was cognizant of the fact that there were 15% fewer respondents during the posttest. However, even by factoring in the difference it was obvious that there were measurable attitudinal changes. The change was most notable around the amount of activities the church was involved in, in the community as well as individual participation in the community.

The researcher also created a small focus group. The focus group was chosen as an additional means of testing changes within the congregation. The focus group is comprised of women that are members of the Women's Missionary Society. This group has spearheaded most of the outreach programs at the church in the last six months. They attend church regularly and are engaged in the activities of the church. The questions for the focus group were primarily open ended and asked specific questions about preaching.

They were as follows:

Please list current outreach activities or events that your church has had or are planning to have.

In comparison to the last 24 months is this:

a. More outreach than usual
b. The Same amount
c. Less

Each respondent indicated more.

If more why do you think there has been an increase?

Each respondent referred to the preaching and topics of sermons

Have you personally been more involved in outreach efforts in the church in comparison to the last 24 months?

If yes, why?

In your opinion does preaching affect participation in outreach and other church activities?

Yes No

100% of respondents said yes.

If yes, briefly describe how.

Is outreach or the need for it currently preached about at your church?

Yes No

100% of respondents agreed

If yes, has it been preached about more over the last 24 months or less over the last 24 months. 100% of respondents said yes.

Has this affected your participation if so how.

The list varied in detail. Seventy five percent indicated that the sermons assisted them in acknowledging their ability to assist others. This same number of respondents became more aware of the obligation to help others.

A major component of all A.M.E. churches is the Women's Missionary Society (W.M.S.) is the missions and outreach arm of the A.M.E. Church. The mission statement of the Connectional W.M.S. indicates that the societies are "called to strengthen our faith and sent to continue to the ministry of Jesus Christ by service and witness in the world."[1]

The researcher initially noted an increase in activity by this group. The group was dormant upon the researcher's arrival in November 2010. There annual activities at that

[1] *The Doctrine and Discipline of the A.M.E. Church* (Nashville, TN A.M.E. Sunday School Union, 2004)

time were to adopt one family at Christmas time and to give away a turkey basket at Thanksgiving. The group also provided candy for the children at the church for Easter. The group had previously been involved in outreach but had been dormant for more than 18 months. What follows is a description of activities that this group has spearheaded.

The group contacted the local Salvation Army and created a quarterly schedule to prepare meals and serve the families that reside at the Salvation Army. They have served meals twice during the testing period. On the last occasion a group of men from the church volunteered to barbecue and the women assisted by making side dishes and serving the food. A fundraiser was held for breast cancer awareness and donated to a National organization as well as to local cancer patient and plans are under way to make this an annual event.

Near the end of the testing period a purse drive was held in conjunction with the Annual Women's Day Program. Over fifty purses were collected. They were donated to a shelter that houses abused women. Plans are currently being made to offer a quarterly Clothing Closet that will provide women reentering the work place clothes for interviews and business attire.

Currently members of the ministry and the church at large are spear heading a community-wide Back to School program. Quinn has taken the lead on the program, in partnership with five other churches from various denominations and the Boys and Girls Club of Jefferson City. The event will serve more than 200 children. Backpacks and school supplies will be provided for the children. They will also have an opportunity to

participate in carnival games for prizes, receive free age appropriate books as well as health, safety and nutrition information.

These are tangible examples of the results of the model. The researcher is convinced that the noticeable attitudinal changes are directly related to the preaching. The increase in outreach activities and the implementation of ministry opportunities support this statement as well. The congregation seems revitalized and looks forward to participating in events designed to help the community. The results of the research support the researcher's hypothesis that prophetic preaching can act as a catalyst in developing outreach ministry.

CHAPTER SIX

REFLECTION, SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The goal of the project was to utilize prophetic preaching as a vehicle for communicating the need for churches to engage in outreach ministry beyond the walls of the church. The researcher maintains that outreach ministry is at the heart of the purpose of the church. A church that is not engaging in activities that benefits others beyond the scope of the congregation is failing to fulfill its duty as the body of Christ.

> Romans 10: 13-17 states, "For, Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" But not all have obeyed the good news; for Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?" So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ.[1]

A basic interpretation of the text above indicates that in order for the people of GOD to hear and understand what they are to do someone has to come with the proclamation. The preacher is sent to spread the Word. The church has a duty to fulfill.

[1] Rom. 10:13b-17.

Without the prophetic voice and leadership of the prophet the church is rendered mute. The researcher has been clear about her call to Prophetic preaching since the day she answered. She was called to pastoral ministry and believes the primary and most crucial task for a pastor to perform is that of preaching. She assumes this task with courage and reverence to GOD.

This mandate is not merely applicable to the Black Church but should be a focal point in all Christian churches. The researcher maintains that in the Black Church the preached Word is the foci. It is the most anticipated moment in any worship service.

It has been said that the time of "Invitation" the opportunity for Christian discipleship is the culminating event of the worship. However, the invitation to Christian Discipleship is an easier task when the preached word has resonated. The proclamation should help new disciples to identify what they are being invited to do. It follows the call and response design of the Black worship style as well of most Black preaching. The preacher calls through the sermon and disciples respond at the time of invitation.

The researcher is student of preaching in every sense of the word and has been she accepted her call. Prior to accepting her call, she took notes on most sermons she heard and would often research information and theological perspectives that were put forth in the sermon. The writer's goal is to hone her craft as much as possible and clearly identifies her craft as preaching.

The researcher describes herself as neophyte in ministry. The compulsion of the implementation of the model coincides with the researcher's third anniversary as a pastor. Therefore she constantly seeks to surround herself with those that are knowledgeable and

to study to become an expert in her field. The researcher began this project with some trepidation. She was a new pastor, at a new congregation and before the ink was dry on her M.Div. she was applying to the D.Min. Program but felt GOD had ordained it all.

Her initial considerations included making sure she was giving adequate time to the demands of pastoring, especially in the area of pastoral care and that the project was given the amount of time it deserved to ensure accurate and effective results. This combined with the relocation and building project of the church being the focal point of the congregation made the researcher a little anxious about being able to carry out the model. In addition according to the researcher, at the onset she was not sure if the project was significant or if it would make a difference in the life of the church, especially in such a short time frame. Yet she believed in what she was doing and believed in the power of GOD through the preach word to do anything but fail.

The researcher has garnered a great deal of respect and the congregation seems to trust her but she was cognizant of the kinds of questions that were asked on the survey. The congregation tends to be insular and the researcher is so new in her pastorate that she did not want to seem invasive. One of the pre implementation tasks that the researcher had was to analyze the congregation and the practices of the congregation. This was helpful as she was still new to the congregation.

She chose the “process frame” as the tool to study the congregation. Utilizing the process tool involves examining formal and informal processes. “Formal processes include practices, procedures and policies that have been openly considered and officially accepted by the congregation. Informal processes refer to the social interaction that

occurs without guidelines or instructions."[1]The informal cues in particular allowed the researcher to know what the sacred cows were. The researcher concluded that there were more informal processes than formal processes. There were specific people that did specific functions even when it was contradictory to the formal processes or written guidelines such as those that appear in the Doctrine and Discipline of the A.M.E. Church.

The researcher did not want to do anything during the testing period that would appear to challenge any process, formal or informal. This also helped to shape the sermons as the researcher realized it was through the proclamation that unnecessary processes or ineffective processes could be reshaped. Not by shaming the existing processes but by exemplifying a more effective model.

The researcher chose to do an initial survey as a precursor to the pretest. This allowed the researcher to get some insight about the parishioner's thoughts on worship and to collect demographic information. It also allowed the congregants to become accustomed to sharing information in this manner.

The researcher spent a considerable amount of time learning about research methods and the differences between quantitative and qualitative methodologies. After deciding what methods best spoke to the context the researcher prepared and distributed the surveys. Based on the number of parishioners that actively engage in the ministry of the church the researcher thought the number of participants was closed ended structured questions, utilizing more yes or no questions than multiple choice and few open ended

[1] Nancy Ammerman, Jackson Carroll, Carl Dudley and William McKinney, *Studying Congregations A New Handbook* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1998)

questions (fill in the blank) with brief responses.[2] The researcher thought these types of questions would attract the least amount of resistance. Based on information derived from in an depth study of *Studying Congregations* by Ammerman, Carroll, Dudley and McKinney the researcher used a combination of main purpose of the surveys was to gain insight on the attitudes of the respondents about the needs of the community and the participation of the church in the community.

The researcher was careful not to give any information or suggest anything that would cause prejudicial results. The pretest and the post-test avoided any questions about preaching specifically. The researcher has considered that this could have been a mistake. The pretest did allow for attitudes about the ministries of the church and the church's role in the community to be expressed but nothing in the pre or post-test dealt with the correlation of the preaching and the attitudes. The researcher sought bridge this gap by gathering information about the effects of the preaching from a focus group. The researcher did this by creating a questionnaire that contained open-ended questions and by allowing the members of the focus group to respond to those questions.

These discussions proved to be revelatory and engaging. The researcher is convinced that the increase in activities at the church as it pertains to outreach is a result of the preaching and teaching that has shed light on these subject matter. After reflecting on the questions that were used to comprise the pre and post-test the researcher indicates there were some self-imposed limitations. The congregation is comprised of educated people and the researcher made the survey as basic as possible.

---

[2]Ibid., 221-226.

The researcher missed the opportunity to ask additional questions that could have provided more detailed insight. This would have been extremely valuable in the pretest phase. It could have led to a more concrete understanding of the attitudes of the congregants about social justice issues.

As the researcher moved from the pre-test to the treatment phase of the treatment phase of the model, the sermons were designed to bring the text alive. This allowed the congregation to experience the woes of ancient Israel and the early church in light of the Twenty First Century Middle Class Black Congregation at Quinn. While Racism and the divisive effects of slavery in America can be seen as one of the primary causes of the economic disparities that many Blacks in America experience, embedded classism is the cause of the divide between the walls of the church and the community at large.

Marvin McMickle indicates that the increase in the number of Blacks that can be referred to as Middle Class came about as a result of the Civil Rights Movement. Desegregation opened the exit ramps of our neighborhoods. McMickle describes the economic diversity of black neighborhoods prior to the Civil Rights Act. He indicates, "richly diverse black communities where people of various income and professional groups wept with those who were weeping an rejoiced with those who were rejoicing." McMickle adds, "The end of residential segregation had a negative result."[3]

This result was the freedom to move which gave some families hope and left many others in despair. We seemed to have abandoned each other.

[3] Marvin McMickle, *Preaching to the Black Middle Class: Words of Challenge Words of Hope* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2000)

The researcher is greatly influenced by her southern upbringing and being a member of a family that fought for the rights of others. The thought of classism in today's world is reminiscent of the House Negroes vs. The Field Negroes. In the researcher's opinion the race as a whole is still not free so therefore all are enslaved and having a different zip code should not cause such a profound separation.

While the researcher raised her children with a middle-class American ethos that included consumerism and materialism she still empathizes and has never lost sight that the least of these is close by and most are just a couple of paychecks from this glaring truth. The researcher brought her passion for preaching and her compassion for those that are victimized by social injustices to every sermonic moment. The researcher is keenly aware that a Black Child in America that has two children by the age of nineteen is counted out and is likely to spend their lives in poverty. The fact that her story was a different one adds to her commitment to the "least of these."

The researcher paid close attention to the level of activity that was generated after each sermon and documented conversations what were had about sermons. She noted that people seemed not in purely emotive manners but moved to action. One conversation that she had with a parishioner who more than likely based on the parishioner's profession and the profession of their spouse has a higher annual salary than anyone in the congregation was especially notable. The parishioner said, "Pastor when you said our congregation was comprised of middle-class people, I had to think about if I had never thought of that, but you were right." The embedded classism is so deep that it does not allow people to see beyond their own social context. If you see beyond your context or your social location you then see that there are others that are different. As long as we are

socially and economically equal there is no need for providing assistance to others. This oblivious thought process subconsciously causes a social blindness. It is similar to the effects of white privilege that makes the "other" virtually invisible.

The researcher is grateful that there is evidence of revelation in the minds, hearts and spiritual eyes of the congregation. Congregants have a "jokingly" complained that the researcher makes them work really hard and there is always something to do or some place to be. Some have said, "our church has never been open this much." The irony is none of the outreach activities that have occurred or have been planned with the exception of bringing purses have been at the suggestion of the pastor. Each activity has been the result of heartfelt thought and it is the opinion of the researcher of the power of prophetic preaching.

The researcher also notes that all sermons are not prophetic but the researcher is called to be a prophetic preacher. The sermons in the series may have been constructed with a particular focal point but this is not episodic and many of the researcher's sermons prior to the treatment were prophetic and dealt with issues of social justice. The congregation seems to expect to be challenged by the word and is starting to take pride in their ability to do ministry.

The focus group did not get a questionnaire after each sermon. This would have given the researcher more data to analyze as to the effectiveness of the sermons but the researcher is not convinced that her approach imposed a limit. Just as the researcher reflected on the basic level of the pretest questions the researcher admits the questionnaire for the focus group could have provided more detailed as well as thought

provoking questions, considering the aptitude of the respondents. Yet the researcher concludes that the use of open -ended questions offsets any limits that the lack of depth may have caused. The researcher maintains that the treatment worked as it generated the implementation of outreach ministry activities. The researcher is assured that the continuous conversations around this will develop into a sustainable long-term outreach ministry or project. The researcher's long-term goal is to move the congregation to a place of providing advocacy for those that are victims of social injustices. It is the researcher's opinion that advocating for rights, opportunities and resources has permanent effects on the lives of people in the community.

The researcher makes a clear distinction between social justice and outreach. Outreach can result in or actually be social justice ministry but the two are not equal. Most outreach including the recent activities that have been initiated at Quinn actually is more accurately categorized as "mercy ministry." Mercy ministry is better than no ministry but only deals with the issues of "daily bread." If follows the old adage of "If you give a person a fish, you will have to provide fish daily but if you teach them to fish they can have food for a lifetime (Anonymous source)."

The researcher is more interested in assisting people to become owners of ponds. This is a tool of empowerment. Empowered people are less dependent on others for survival. Empowered individuals do not live their lives requesting permission to obtain the necessities of life. If social and economic injustices are acknowledged, analyzed and fought against eventually eradication occurs.

If Christian believers accept the unequivocal truth of GOD creating all of humanity in GOD's image unjust practices will cease to exist. This is the key to breaking down social, economic, religious and political walls. One responsibility of the church is to strive toward those goals. Since the age of eighteen the researcher's motto has been, "To always leave others better than you find them." Her ministry is based on exemplifying the love of GOD. She believes that through encounters with the Holy Spirit and practical actions on behalf of humans people will be better off as a result of her ministry efforts. She is committed to serving the people of GOD with a spirit of excellence and expectation. The expectation is that transformation is inevitable.

The researcher acknowledges that transformation is a process. Through the course of this project she has come to understand that mercy ministry such as traditional food pantries can provide the building blocks for long term transformative ministry. However she is fully aware of the proclivity to allow these kinds of ministries to placate the long-term goal of providing social justice ministry. She is committed to continue to assist the Disciples of Quinn Chapel with the process of internal transformation. This will empower and equip them to transform other lives.

The researcher is committed to the vocation of preaching and accepts the unrelenting call of prophetic preaching with humility and courage. She preaches with the expectation that the presence of GOD will be evident in transformed, minds, attitudes, situations and lives. She plans to continue to hold up the mantle of preaching prophetically and with excellence as she is now a part of the lineage of those august group of men and women of GOD that have become a part of the Samuel Dewitt Proctor legacy.

APPENDIX A

PROJECT SERMON:

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH: LOOKING FOR THE BODY OF CHRIST

Neighborhood Watch: Looking for the Body of Christ

Luke 10:25-37

25 On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

26 “What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?”

27 He answered, “ Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’ and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.

28 “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”

29 But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

30 In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead.

31 A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side.

32 So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

33 But a Samaritan, was he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him.

34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him.

35 The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. **‘Look after** him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’

36 “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

37 The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.”

Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

Most of the time surveillance cameras are used to confirm alibis or to implicate a subject in a crime. When something happens and a subject is accused of a crime and they use the "it wasn't me defense, the investigator may ask where were you on a certain day at a certain time. Can anyone confirm you whereabouts?

Any other cases a crime is committed and there is an unsub, an unknown perpetrator and cameras in the area are checked to see whom the perpetrator was they carefully check to see who was at the scene of the crime and does anyone look suspicious?

Well they have checked footage from cameras in neighborhoods all across America. Neighborhoods with young people, senior citizens, Blacks, whites, Latinos, Asians and other minorities. These neighborhoods have many differences but one thing they have in common is they all have these buildings with steeples and crosses. They are listed in the phone book and on Google as churches. So the question that members of the neighborhood watch programs across the country want to know is where are they? They are missing. Neighborhood Watch Looking for the Body of Christ.

Let's look at this familiar passage of the Good Samaritan. Most people focus on the Good Samaritan and rightfully so, but let's take a look at the nameless victim.

The Bible indicates he was traveling from Jerusalem, to Jericho. It was about 17 miles. Jesus is in teaching mode, he they are trying to catch him off guard.

These are those they know the law, an attorney asks what can do if I want to live forever. Jesus says, you can read, you know how it we have been doing church for a long time, Some of you do it, Reverend what can I do? It's not what I want you to do. It's what GOD says in his word, in Mark and Matthew Jesus answers with these words but in Luke he reports that Jesus basically says, you tell me. This isn't your first Sunday at church. What did you recite in the Call to Worship? The two greatest commandments love GOD with everything, your heart keep GOD deep down inside, in the core of your being. Keep him on your mind, and let all your actions be a result of how you feel about him, what Erikson would call your consciousness,

If you love GOD you will love your neighbor, so after centuries of reading these words first in the second OT passage in the lawyer's answer is Lev 19:18. It is found also in Rom 13:9; Gal 5:14; and Jas 2:8. In Luke the two OT passages are combined into a single command, whereas in Mark 12:31and Matt 22:39. Quit worrying about others your role is to be on the lookout for them.

Your responsibility is to do whatever they need.

I know most of you haven't fallen short of loving yourself, but somehow the neighbor and GOD has been left out, and I know you think that showing up at church demonstrates your love for GOD but the Bible says until you love your neighbor.

I realized maybe we hadn't figured out who the neighbors were. How can we love the ones we don't know? I was reading some questionnaires regarding how to determine if

neighborhood watch was needed in your area, questions such as have you ever been a victim,

As a number of our neighbors have recently had problems with (vandalism, theft from vehicles, burglary, peeping toms, loud parties)

A number of our neighbors have observed (drug dealing, prostitution, menacing behavior, bullying) in our area.

If you would like to participate in a neighborhood meeting to discuss the problem and possible solutions,

• Have you noticed chronic problems with vandalism or suspicious activity?

Do you have concerns about safety for yourself or your children?

This can be the question to determine if there is a need for the church to go outside the walls.

Does anybody need anything?

I know you thought your neighbors had to live on your street, look like you,

Act like you, have things in common with you, we try to give them a way to qualify for the job of neighbor but they qualified when they were born, but have you qualified since you joined the Body of Christ?

It's not enough to be in the neighborhood but hidden in plain sight

But the Bible says if GOD created them they are your neighbors.

They are looking for us. They know who they are, they know where they are but they are wondering where in the world is the body of Christ? I see the steeples?

I see the door I see them come on Sundays but they don't stay long. Where in the world are the Missionaries and other church people when they need help?

Imagine being the nameless man in the text. Coming down this road Jerusalem 2500 ft. above sea level and Jericho 800 feet below, also known as the Way of Blood. Probably thinking that since he was coming from the church, near the church there would be somebody looking out. So he went out and found himself robbed at gunpoint and then he waited thank the Lord here comes a Pastor. But he went across the street. That way he can't ask me for help, somebody in here is trying to look like the Body of Christ, the church people, but you keep crossing the street so you can pretend you don't see what's needed. I know up you live on the other side so you don't know what's going on but the neighbors are watching. They are watching to see how we take care of our property; The Responsibility is to do for others what you would do for yourself.

Your responsibility is to step in when there is a need. Do you need a gold filigree invitation to help or can you see a need and just get it done? There was a responsibility that the priest and the Levite had but they abandoned it.

What about you? Have you abandoned your responsibility?

The neighborhood knows your responsibility that's why they are watching.

Watching to see how you interact with them, if you interact with them.

What do you say about the ills of the world, we can't stay silent and then get mad when the world speaks? Here after the preacher didn't have time and the Steward didn't have time. It's time here comes the world the outsider, Samaritans were unsaved thought to be the unchosen, ones after all if the Israelites are chosen it means somebody was not chosen, the reason the disciples are asking why Jesus was talking to the woman at the well is because she was a Samaritan. Children are looking for us. Seniors are looking for us. The neighborhood is watching.

162 years later, what are we doing? GOD is calling us to transform lives. Anybody in here rather be a Samaritan than a church person. What are you going to do?

Who are you going to help?

The next time we go to the Salvation Army put feeding souls on the agenda,

Anybody can take some food but they are waiting watching for somebody to change lives. It's time out for playing church. Its time to be the church! Jesus doesn't just feed people he keeps them from being hungry.

The people that are not supposed to do anything.

You know that is my job it at church! I wonder why she is doing that?!

Well maybe because it needed to be done.

If you don't somebody, else well.

The church has abandoned the neighborhood. I know we are in the neighborhood but we aren't out in the neighborhood. Missionaries we don't need you just to go through the motions and to put on white quarterly but we really need you to really serve others. Jesus says in Matthew 25 if you do it to the least of these you do it to me. What are you doing or not doing to or for Christ? These are the rules take care of the Widows the orphans.

APPENDIX B

PROJECT SERMON:

Don't Count Me Out Lift Me Up!

Don’t Count Me Out Lift Me Up

Mark 2:1-12

When he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home.
2 So many gathered around that there was no longer room for them, not even in front of the door; and he was speaking the word to them.
3 Then some people came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them.
4 And when they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and after having dug through it, they let down the mat on which the paralytic lay.
5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”
6 Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts,
7 “Why does this fellow speak in this way? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?”
8 At once Jesus perceived in his spirit that they were discussing these questions among themselves; and he said to them, “Why do you raise such questions in your hearts?
9 Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Stand up and take your mat and walk’?
10 But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he said to the paralytic—
11 “I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home.”

12 And he stood up, and immediately took the mat and went out before all of them; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this!”

The people in the Bible were not very different than us, the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Those of us that know so much but do so little. Always trying to correct others and judging. I wonder why that happened to her.

He had to do something, that's why he lost his job.

They look for sin thinking there is a direct correlation to a physical ailment and sin. Many people that suffer from physical and psychological ailments as well as social infirmities suffer more because of how they are treated.

Even the biblical writers equated disability with sin. The word handicap in its self is a label and not widely accepted among those with disabilities. It's interesting in a troubling kind of way that the bus service. For those with disability is call "handiwheels." When we label people we count them out, educators and psychologists will tell you many engage in what's called the "self-fulfilling prophecy."

Those that live with disabilities especially physical ones have been ostracized for years. In medieval times they were thought to be witches. We are guilty of making jokes about riding on the short bus and the truth of the matter is some of us have issues that are much deeper than the eye can see.

Those with disabilities have been left out on the mat for centuries.

The late Nancy Eisland in her book with the shocking title the Disabled GOD helped readers to understand that Jesus comes back with his "broken body" as a sign of

solidarity with those with disabilities. Even as we go to the table today we take the broken body of Christ if Christ accepts those that are broken what more should we do?! It's a simple message it's time for the church to move beyond the walls and go out and pick some folk up. We have been leaving them out in the mat for too long.

Making people feel bad when they come to church, Preaching and teaching in a way that made everybody guilty but didn't tell them how to be forgiven.

If someone has one leg shorter than the other we can see it, but they can't see how we fall short when no one is looking.

They don't know that if it paralysis was based on sin none of us would have walked in his morning. It's time to get out into the streets and not convict people but convince them that despite their ailments Jesus is a healer. In the law of the Old Testament it said if you had certain physical ailments you couldn't take communion. Well there are some churches that are still denying access to the table because people can't get in.

Maybe we think we are at a wrestling match and we are supposed to count people out but in the name of Jesus it's time to lift them up!

They didn't tell him what he needed, we need to quit trying to correct and start directing. Quit leaving folk for dead and start lifting them up.

I know you have a problem with drugs because I can look at you and tell, well I know where the head rehab associate is. Let me take you to him

I know you drink more than you eat but I got something that's better than AAA its JC Jesus Christ if we can get you to him,

Time is out for waiting for those who need help to come to the church it's time to go to them and quit denying them access and blocking the door lift them up.

The brothers picked him up four of them and took him by any means necessary to the temple they lowered him down in front of Jesus breaking all of the old rules. Now I don't want preachers coming to the pulpit without me inviting them but the altar is always open; sinners, the sick, the troubled can come anytime. James Cone said GOD is the GOD of the oppressed.

Jesus looked at the friends not even the man and said their faith had set the man free, his sins were forgiven.

He said that for the crowd since they equated the man's position the fact that he was lame with his sin. We are so busy trying to count folk out some of us even get mad when GOD counts them in. They questioned Jesus' authority; sometimes because we have been wearing labels so long and we have been made to feel so bad we have to hear that we are forgiven in order to get up from our mat.

Jesus says stand up, when you have been down for so long you may have forgotten how to walk. You had so many bills you forgot how to pay attention so many drugs have been in your system, so many affairs, so many letters of rejection you want to throw in the towel, you were the black sheep for so long, you forgot how to dream about Success,

You did so many bad things, you are stuck on the mat of unforgiveness, and if GOD forgives you surely you can forgive yourself.

First you stand up then you take that mat up, so you won't be tempted to get back down on it,

It is time to pick up those habits and give them to Jesus, you keep trying to leave them down like a dog burying a bone so you can go back to it, pick it up and walk

Now go back home so the people can see you and know what GOD has done.

You go back and lift somebody else up with your testimony.

Be like the woman at the well tell them come see a man.

Church if we want to see GOD work like never before we need to lift folk up like never before, the hungry and the homeless, the incarcerated and the infirmed, like never before Jesus us waiting to blow our minds but we have some heavy lifting to do. Don't count people out lift them up!

I don't know about you but I have down before, I didn't look disable but I felt disabled didn't know how I was going to get up and just as I started to get comfortable on my mat I felt a helping hand lifting me up, maybe it was the prayers of the saints I heard the Lord say this is my broken body broken for the remission of your sins.

I stood up then I looked at that mat, a mat of procrastination, indecision, low self-esteem, bad decisions and said I don't need that anymore.

Don't count me out lift me up!!!!

(Turn) When we count out others we count out Jesus,

Jesus said don't count me out lift me up!

If I be lifted up I will draw all people unto me. When we lift up our brothers and our sisters out of their situations into reconciliation we lift up Jesus.

One Friday afternoon they counted Jesus out,

They saw him hanging on the cross!

They pierced him in his side,

I can see them counting him out as the blood ran down!

They counted him out after they buried him,

On Saturday they thought they had him

But early, early, early Sunday morning

Just when man had counted Jesus out,

The Father came and lifted him up!

Now you have the same resurrecting power!

If they count you out Jesus will stop by and lift you up!

If people don't lift you up,

The rose of Sharon will lift you up!

If your family counts you out, the wheel in the middle of the wheel will lift you up!!!

Don't count me out lift me up!!!!!

Say yeah, say yeah, say yeah! Yeahhhhhhh!!!!!

APPENDIX C

PROJECT SERMON OUTLINE:

You Might be Next

You Might Be Next

Esther 4:1-16

Spotlight on 13 spotlight

Sermon Outline

When Mordecai learned all that had been done, Mordecai tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went through the city, wailing with a loud and bitter cry;
2 he went up to the entrance of the king's gate, for no one might enter the king's gate clothed with sackcloth.
3 In every province, wherever the king's command and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting and weeping and lamenting, and most of them lay in sackcloth and ashes.
4 When Esther's maids and her eunuchs came and told her, the queen was deeply distressed; she sent garments to clothe Mordecai, so that he might take off his sackcloth; but he would not accept them.
5 Then Esther called for Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs, who had been appointed to attend her, and ordered him to go to Mordecai to learn what was happening and why.
6 Hathach went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king's gate,
7 and Mordecai told him all that had happened to him and the exact sum of money that Haman
had promised to pay into the king's treasuries for the destruction of the Jews. 8 Mordecai also gave him a copy of the written decree issued in Susa for their destruction, that he

might show it to Esther, explain it to her, and charge her to go to the king to make supplication to him and entreat him for her people.

9 Hathach went and told Esther what Mordecai had said.

10 Then Esther spoke to Hathach and gave him a message for Mordecai, saying,

11 “All the king’s servants and the people of the king’s provinces know that if any man or woman goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law—all alike are to be put to death. Only if the king holds out the golden scepter to someone, may that person live. I myself have not been called to come in to the king for thirty days.”

12 When they told Mordecai what Esther had said,

13 Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, “Do not think that in the king’s palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews.

14 For if you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father’s family will perish. Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this.”

15 Then Esther said in reply to Mordecai,

16 “Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will also fast as you do. After that I will go to the king, though it is against the law; and if I perish, I perish.

The people are crying but you can't hear them because you are in the palace with the gate locked. If you don't see them you can't hear them.

People in detail that are on the margins

Insurance,

School

Heroin

Jefferson City stats

On the brink of death

Martin Neimoller

When the Nazis came for the communists,

I remained silent;

I was not a communist.

When they locked up the social democrats,

I remained silent;

I was not a social democrat.

When they came for the trade unionists,

I did not speak out;

I was not a trade unionist.

When they came for the Jews,

I remained silent;

I wasn't a Jew.

When they came for me,

there was no one left to speak out.

In 1970 280,000 2000 2 million

Total Incarcerated, Prison and Jail 41,075

Prison Population

(Rate per 100,000) 30,614

(508)

Jail Population

(Rate per 100,000) 10,461

(180)

Probation Population 57,429

Parole Population 19,421

RACIAL/ETHNIC DISPARITY IN INCARCERATION

Black: White Ratio 5.2:1

Hispanic: White Ratio 1.2:1

JUVENILES IN CUSTODY 1,197

STATE CORRECTIONS EXPENDITURES (In Millions) $677

FELONY DISENFRANCHISEMENT

Total Disenfranchised

(%) 93,752

(2.2%)

We don't currently have a contract with private prison

Nationally, one in three black boys and one in 17 black girls born in 2001 is at risk of imprisonment during their lifetime.

Kaiser Family Foundation there is 852,000 people in Missouri with no health insurance

100 African Americans go to school only 64 graduate

Even in JC 100 go in and 85 come out

Yeah I know they live outside the gate but you could be next

Christianity involves some risk

Moses took a risk let my people go

David took a risk with Goliath

Harriet Tubman took risk

Sojourner Truth took risk

Richard Allen took a risk

Marcus Garvey took risk

Malcolm took risk

Martin took a risk but more than that Jesus took risk,

He risked it all for you and for me if you really want to be a disciple go take a risk,

Help somebody other than your 4, you might be next

APPENDIX D

PROJECT SERMON:

UNBREAK MY HEART

Unbreak My Heart

I Cor. 13

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

2 And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing

3 If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

4 Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant

5 or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;

6 it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth.

7 It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8 Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end.

9 For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part;

10 but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end.

11 When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways.

12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. 13 And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

I know that this passage makes us feel all warm and fuzzy because it's about love, written with the passion that one that writes ballads would write or least that's what it looks like on the surface.

Love is a many splendid things, love is good,

Love is new,

Love is..... All I hoped it would be

Patty LaBelle sang about the right kind of lover,

Luther said love was so amazing,

Brian McKnight said until roses turn blue and violets turn red he would always love...

Al green said love would make you do right, ah but there is a flip side of that it will make you do wrong.

But has anybody ever been pushed over that thin line between love and hate,

Anybody ever had a broken heart,

I don't mean a bruised ego, or a lil love spat. I mean a cant think straight, cried till you had no more tears broken heart.

The songwriter asked, What becomes of the broken hearted?

I know some of you are too saved to have ever heard of these songs,

Maybe you sing when nothing else would do love lifted me,

But what about when love is gone, Luther said a House is not a home if love isn't there and no offense but blues seems to relish in the heartbreak, as a fixer one that likes to effect change and move people to a place of wholeness I acknowledge that a broken heart may be real but what are we going to do about it

I heard Tony Braxton say Unbreak my heart and I believe that's where Paul on behalf of GOD is in this text,

In what Walter Brueggeman calls my theological imagination I can hear GOD saying church if you to have a love thing, first you are going to have to unbreak my heart!

Un-break my heart

Say you'll love me again

Undo this hurt you caused

When you walked out the door

And walked out of my life

Un-cry these tears

I cried so many nights

Un-break my heart

My heart

Take back that sad word good-bye

Bring back the joy to my life

Don't leave me here with these tears

Come and kiss this pain away

I can't forget the day you left

Time is so unkind

And life is so cruel without you here beside me

How have we broken the heart of GOD?

don't take my word for it, here in the text .

Paul is a rhetorician, a skilled Wordsmith, he is using the condition the state of the church to take a look under the cover at the Church at Corinth. Corinth a blended church of Jews and Gentiles. The members of the Jewish community were those that were left from exile and proselytes, new converts. Church a family place and suddenly change started to occur, we became more mobile, people started to move out of the neighborhood and others moved in.

Our neighborhoods look like puzzles with missing pieces. One piece over here and one piece over there. Instead of the church becoming a template for the world we have acquiesced and it we look like everything else.

to treat it different became disconnected from it.

The division outside moved inside. We started having class warfares

Churches were the cultural center of the community people could depend on the church, My mother ended up in a jail cell in Selma because the Civil Rights movement was strengthened in the basement and pulpits of churches.

That’s when the doctors, lawyers, teachers and the maid lived on the same street.

Seemingly when we began to go for the okay doke and have our neighborhoods broken up and broken down, the lines began to be drawn inside the church.

For many of us since we didn't live in the neighborhood anymore we started to treat it different became disconnected from it. The disconnection started to show up on Sunday morning.

Corinth poor parishioners

While the church was made up of Jews and Gentiles there is no indication that they had different beliefs, but they did have different social statuses and therein lies the problem.

The division outside moved inside. We started having class warfares. The Corinthians had the Jews versus the Gentiles.

The wealthy people arrived earlier and partook of all of the resources leaving those that had little with little, That's where the words that we like to take out of context from 1 Corinthians 11 come from if you are hungry eat at home, there was no room at the table for the have nots, The haves were so busy promoting themselves and making room for themselves

I know we have some extremely gifted people lay clergy but gifts will fade away,

Your language is eloquent you know all of the right words you are a linguistic genius,

You are prophetic and your prayer language makes the angels tremble,

But do you love anybody other than yourself

We keep making noise but aren't really saying anything.

We are making noise, we should be making noise about the Travon Martins of the world but there are families living in dysfunction and a dysfunctional church can't help,

We keep breaking GOD's heart because we don't love those that we are charged to love.

The widows, the orphans.

Some of you give, tithes and offering you are quick to write a list of all of your recent donations to people yeah look at me.

The county vs. the city,

The Trustees vs. the Stewards

Division

Older members vs. younger members.

Big church vs. lil church

If we really loved and exhibited love

Whenever we oppose each other there is a winner and a loser. Well this afternoon I hate to tell you. I know you look like a winner, but you have been defeated.

It's time to check out of "heartbreak hotel." A place where Hearts have been broken, communities disenfranchised, families familial and church families torn apart, by the noise that looked like and was supposed to be love, noise that was cloaked in the finest robes with chains adorning crosses on the end, yes that was cross with Jesus had one but those that want to clang around as if the gospel is about them often feel the need to wear the ecclesiastical jewelry store around their neck,

While we have been pontificating and inflating our numbers the church has gotten smaller and heart break hotel has become a chain.

I debated with a colleague at annual Conference as they prepared the state of the church report by blaming all of our empty pews on the mega church

Hope is personal, normally we hope for something we want to obtain, it's your expectation. Faith is the glue that allows you to hold on and will sometimes provide resuscitation when you grow weary from your failed expectation!

If we can get out of our own head that's filled with the noise of the crosses clanging around our neck or of the empty words that we speak to each other on Sunday, because an empty wagon makes the most noise.

When we get to the heart of things we can Unbreak GODs heart. Some of us break hearts because we never really learned how to love it's the family dysfunction that is passed

down like a silver serving set, I mourn for the family of Travon Martin but I really mourn for black families all over this country,

Part of the issue is, the world hasn't seen us demonstrate real love,

So Paul doesn't just share with us what it isn't he tells us what is.

Love is patient, not just with the people you like but with the ones you don't like,

Can I keep it real that's hard and GOD knew it would be. Love says I can wait until you get it because GOD waited on me. Some of us say we are waiting and we are like rude impatient customers at the restaurant, my goodness how much longer will it take did they have to go fishing. He tries to demonstrate what doesn't look like love,

4 Love is patient; love is kind; Waits without an attitude

love is not envious or boastful or arrogant translation love waits without an attitude.

5 or rude. It does not insist on its own way; love realizes that it's not about me, it's about the Kingdom of GOD.

It is not irritable or resentful; if I love you I am not resentful when you get more airtime than I do.

I realize that we all have a purpose and you walking in yours will not negate mine.

6 it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth.

7 It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8 Love never ends.

The word ends here is the same as the word used when an actor exits, love is not a scene in a play, it’s the building the theatre and Shakespeare said the World was a stage. Its eternal GOD is love because GOD is everlasting

I know you see visions and dreams but one day you will sleep and they will be no more.

But love is a band it's a circle it has no beginning and no end.

But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. The world is looking for something they can count on, the church sent them to Countrywide and gave them loans, well the bubble burst and that came to an end,

If we want to Unbreak GOD's heart and the hearts of the people we have to give them some news they can use, the Good News that's Jesus.

11 When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways.

Some of us are still operating in child's play our love for each other and therefore for GOD is puppy love at best. We are still writing notes like we did in grade school,

Do you love me yes or no?

Well that love is built on reciprocation,

What if they answer is no, will you still love them anyway?

Are you really ready to love your neighbor as you love yourself or does it depend on the neighborhood they live in,

Not only does St. Louis have a dividing line but the church does too!

And we wonder while people don't want to come in?!

Awe but that's who we are but imagine who we can be,

Who we used to be back when materials didn't define our worth

Because if one of us ate we all ate, of one had their budget everybody had theirs.

The rural churches were just as important as the city churches.

Before we were able to move to North County, West County and the other side of Delmar. 12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. 13 And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

We have hope, which is the expectation of something we need to happen

Faith allows us to patiently wait on the manifestation

Oh but love us an action word it is the divine activity that is the demonstration of the GOD in us.

Are there any demonstrators in the house this morning,

Anybody tired of faking and shaking and ready to get out of the upper room and go be church.

Love the greatest gift of all.

Before we figure out this love thing we need to need to know what love is.

What is love the

Greek knew it could not be easily defined

So they had 4 words storage affection familial love that parents had for children

Phileo the kind of love and loyalty for your family and friends

But it seems we have got stuck in Eros.

agape, is the GOD kind of love.

Transition: Ah but love is divine demonstration of the Imago Dei, the GOD in you, that allows you to do something on behalf of someone else. Dr. Cynthia Hale says it's an act of will. Something you are intentional about.

I don't care how long you have been saved most of us still think of the love the world sings of. **Whitney sung her greatest hit of all times written by country singer Dolly Pardon, "I will always love you!"**

Even in the song she was telling the Brotha, I am going to go, I can't stay because I am not what you need! A few weeks ago she left never to return.

Levert said, Loving him was like ABC, easy as 1 2 3 as fine as he was he left to be with the Lord!

Luther sung more love songs than most of his time, Here and Now, So Amazing to be loved, last night I fell in love, but one day he fell asleep never to wake or sing again.

But that was then and now he's sleeping in his grave

Heavy D asks the question Now that we have found love what are we going to do with it?

Just when he was on the comeback maybe ready to answer he dropped dead!

My bad that's my generation let me back the love train up,

Johnny Taylor had a Good Love one you could bet your last $2 on but then he died

Sam Cooke was looking for his dream lover, and in the words of the a Bible he slept

The one thing they all have in common was that the love they sang of no matter how good it made you feel, was fleeting at best and temporary

Just like church The King of Pop the one that really crossed generations, genres and ethnic boundaries checked betrayed and heart broken lovers into "Heartbreak Hotel" but the King of Kings is calling the ecclessia, those of us that claim to be called out To check them out.

Ah if we really want a love thing we have to come down from our lofty places, get out of the upper room hiding like some punks and go out and mend the broken hearts of the world,

Many of whom we broke,

If we weren't to experience and to spread a love thing

It's time to sing a new song, one about

the real agape love,

Unconditional love that GOD has for us, the can that loves you when you are unlovable the kind that bears he cross, not the one that is weighing you down but the one that symbolizes the cross of the Christ

In order to Unbreak GOD's heart then we need to give up our own desires and go out and tell a dying world Jesus lives.

Then we have to give up some stuff, give up our selfish ways, give up our desire for position, give up privilege and take up love,

Take up kindness, put down position,

Put down envy, put down pride,

Put down competition

The we're to love things one was the birth of Jesus

John 3:16 says for GOD so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son that who's over that's the people in church that are always up front that you don't like

That's the pastor you wish the Bishop would move, that's the officers that block your program,

The Bible says that we like the church at Ephesus have forgotten our first love,

I know we love the legacy of Richard Allen,

We love the Discipline,

We love and respect the Bishop and our leadership but do you love the one that first loved you

Do you love him,

If you love him he said feed my sheep,

Don't fleece the people feed them

The ones you like and the ones you don't like

If you love him,

Suffers long, not the kind of love that has to make a 6 stanza hymn about all the pain and suffering one has endured,

Not the whining blues song, that repeats over and over again, "My baby done left me, and look at me poor me,

But it's the kind of suffering that we see on the cross, the kind that says its not about me but it's the about the GOD in me that allows me to see and help those in need.

Not just to offer alms so I can use it as a deduction on my taxes,

Not just to have your name called as one in the bulletin that gave the highest offering,

Not just so Bishop can see me with my $100 offering but the kind that says because I love GOD I can see that he made you and me and even though you have no position to help me, despite the fact that my association with you will not help me politically,

I give to you because I am in community with you even if our zip codes are hundreds of thousand dollars apart.

I have charity because I realize in the words of James Cone "GOD is on the side of the oppressed" and until we are all liberated we are all oppressed.

Love is indelible, eternal, and incorruptible

End with when nothing else what do “love lifted me.

APPENDIX B

SURVEYS AND QUESTIONAIRES

Quinn Chapel Pre Survey April 2012

Please Answer these questions and do not include your name

1. I have been a member of Quinn for

☐ 2 Years or less ☐ 2-5 years ☐ 5- 10 years ☐ more than 10 years

2. I am

☐ Under 35 years old ☐ 35-50 ☐ 51-65 ☐ Over 65

3. I am

Married Single Widowed Divorced

4. I am

Male Female

5. Are you involved in any ministries?

Yes or No

6. Does Quinn need more ministries?

If yes, what are suggestions:

_____
_____
_____

7. Is the church doing a good job in helping the community?

_____

8. Are you doing all you can to help those in need in the community?

Give Examples_____

Education Status

High School Diploma Associate's Degree Undergraduate Degree Graduate Degree

Quinn Chapel Post Survey July, 2012

Please Answer these questions and do not include your name

1. I have been a member of Quinn for

☐ 2 Years or less ☐ 2-5 years ☐ 5- 10 years ☐ more than 10 years

2. I am

☐ Under 35 years old ☐ 35-50 ☐ 51-65 ☐ Over 65

3. I am

Married Single Widowed Divorced

4. I am

Male Female

5. Are you involved in any ministries?

Yes or No

6. Does Quinn need more ministries?

If yes, what are suggestions:

_____
_____
_____

7. Is the church doing a good job in helping the community?

_____

Has your answer to this question changed over the last few months?

Yes or No

What has caused you to feel different about how the church is helping the community?

_____

8. Are you doing all you can to help those in need in the community?

Give Examples_____

Education Status

High School Diploma Associate's Degree Undergraduate Degree Graduate Degree

Focus Group Questionnaire

Over the last several months you have participated in outreach efforts at your church. You also have been identified as someone that attends church regularly.

Please list current outreach activities or events that your church has had or are planning to have.

In comparison to the last 24 months is this:

a. More outreach than us
b. The Same amount
c. Less

If more why do you think there has been an increase?

Have you personally been more involved in outreach efforts in the church in comparison to the last 24 months?

If yes, why?

In your opinion does preaching affect participation in outreach and other church activities?

Yes No

If yes, briefly describe how.

Is outreach or the need for it currently preached about at your church?

Yes No

If yes, has it preached been about

More over the last 24 months

Less over the last 24 months

Has this affected your participation if so how?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

African Methodist Episcopal Book of Discipline. Nashville: A.M.E. Publishing Board, 2004 and 2008.

African Methodist Episcopal Church General Secretary/Chief Information Officer. "About Us." African Methodist Episcopal Church. http://www.amechurch.com/about-us/mission.php (accessed 2012).

African Methodist Episcopal Church General Secretary/Chief Information Officer. "Welcome." African Methodist Episcopal Church. www.ame-church.com (accessed 2012).

Ammerman, Nancy, Jackson Carroll, Carl Dudley and William McKinney. *Studying Congregations A New Handbook.* Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1998.

Boff, Clodovis and George V. Pixley. *The Bible, The Church and the Poor.* Maryknoll: Orbis, 1989.

Brueggeman, Walter. *The Prophetic Imagination.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001.

Brunner, Emil (David Cairns, trans.). *Dogmatics (Vol. 3)*: *The Christian Doctrine of the Church, Faith and Consummation.* Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960.

City of Jefferson. "History/Heritage of Jefferson City." City of Jefferson Online. http://www.jeffcitymo.org/main/historyheritage.html (accessed 2012).

Cone, James. *Speaking the Truth: Ecumenism, Liberation and Black Theology.* Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1988.

Craddock, Fred. *Preaching*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985.

Culpepper, R. Alan. *I John 2 John 3 John (Knox Preaching Guides)* Atlanta: J. Knox Press: 1985.

Douglas, Frederick. Excerpt from "What to the Slaves Is the Fourth of July" in *Preaching With Sacred Fire: An Anthology of African American Sermons, 1750 to The Present* (ed. Martha Simmons and Frank Thomas), 135-160. New York: W.W. Norton 2010.

Evans, James Jr. *We Have Been Believers.* Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1992.

Floyd, Wayne Whitson. *The Wisdom and Witness of Bonhoeffer.* Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2000.

Franklin, Robert M. *Crisis In The Village: Restoring Hope in African American Communities*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007.

Harris, James. *Preaching Liberation*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995.

_____, *The Word Made Plain, The Power and Promise of Preaching.* Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2004.

Jefferson City, MO History www.jeffersoncity.org (accessed 2011)

Kysar, Robert. *Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament: I, II, III John.* Minneapolis: Augusburg, 1986.

Laniak, Timothy S. *Shame and Honor in the Book of Esther: Society of Biblical Literature.* Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998.

LaRue, Cleophus J. *I Believe I'll Testify*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011.

Liturgy of the A.M.E. Church. Nashville: A.M.E. Sunday School Union, 1961 Reprinted 2009.

McMickle, Marvin. *Preaching to the Black Middle Class: Words of Challenge Words of Hope.* Valley Forge: Judson Press, 2000.

_____, *Where Have All the Prophets Gone: Reclaiming Prophetic Preaching in America.* Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2006.

Mitchell, Henry. *Black Preaching: The Recovery of a Powerful Art*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990.

Mitchem, Stephanie. *Name It and Claim It: Prosperity Preaching in the Black Church.* Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2007.

Moore, Carey A. *Studies in the Book of Esther.* New York: Ktav Publishing, 1982.

Ringe, Sharon H. and Frederick C. Tiffany. *Biblical Interpretation: A Roadmap.* Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996.

Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference. “About Us: General Information.” Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference. http://www.sdpconference.info/index.php?option=com_k2&view=itemlist&layout=category&task=category&id=11&Itemid=294 (accessed 2012).

Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference, “Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference: 'The Social Justice Network.'” Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference. www.sdpconference.info (accessed 2012).

Sculark, Jasmine, “Gamechangers” Sermon preached at Central Baptist Church, St. Louis, Missouri, July 2010.

Tisdale, Lenora Tubbs. *Prophetic Preaching: A Pastoral Approach.* Louisville: John Knox Press, 2010.

Turabian, Kate. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations. Revised by* Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb and Joseph M. Williams Chicago: University of Chicago, 2007.

United States Census Bureau. “State and County QuickFacts: Jefferson City (city), Missouri.” United States Census Bureau. http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/29/2937000.html (accessed 2011).